From a photo of Miss Hattie Herbert, *by Edwards & Smith, Oldham.*

How sweet are Japan's dainty almond-eyed daughters
All men may perceive from the maiden above.
Their voices resembling the falling of waters,
They tenderly murmur the language of love.
Idyllic Japan! theme of harp and of pen;
Enchanting thy women, heroic thy men.

Digitized by Google

By permission of the Berlin Photographic Co., 133 New Bond Street, London, W.

OFF FOR THE HONEYMOON.

From a Painting by F. Morgan.

Digitized by Google

STAGE DILEMMAS.

A Series of Embarrassing Incidents in the Careers of Well-known Actresses and Actors.

Photo *Ellis & Walery.*

HOW THE THEATRE CAT SPOILT A DUET.

An Incident in Miss Delia Mason's Career.

The scene was the Prince of Wales' Theatre, and the time the middle of a duet in which Miss Delia Mason was taking part with her stage lover, Brian.

Suddenly, without receiving any official "call," the black theatre cat made his appearance from the wings, took up his position near the singers, and stared—particularly at Miss Mason.

The audience laughed, but still the duettists sang on.

Presently the cat turned round and sat with his back to the couple with an air of supreme contempt.

The audience simply roared, so did the singers, and the duet was, of course, a complete fiasco.

Digitized by Google

Flint Ellis & Walery.

THE SHOE THAT WOULD COME OFF.

A Notable Achievement by Miss Topsy Sinden.

A startlingly comic episode occurred in the very early days of Miss Topsy Sinden's stage career—indeed, she was quite a child at the time.

She was dancing in the "Old Guard" when her shoe flew off into the stalls, and hit an old gentleman on the head.

Fortunately for pretty little Miss Sinden the elderly victim was not of the peppery variety. He took the unpremeditated attack very nicely. He also took the shoe, and wrote the child a charming letter, asking if he might keep it as a souvenir.

Needless to say he was permitted to do so.

Digitized by Google

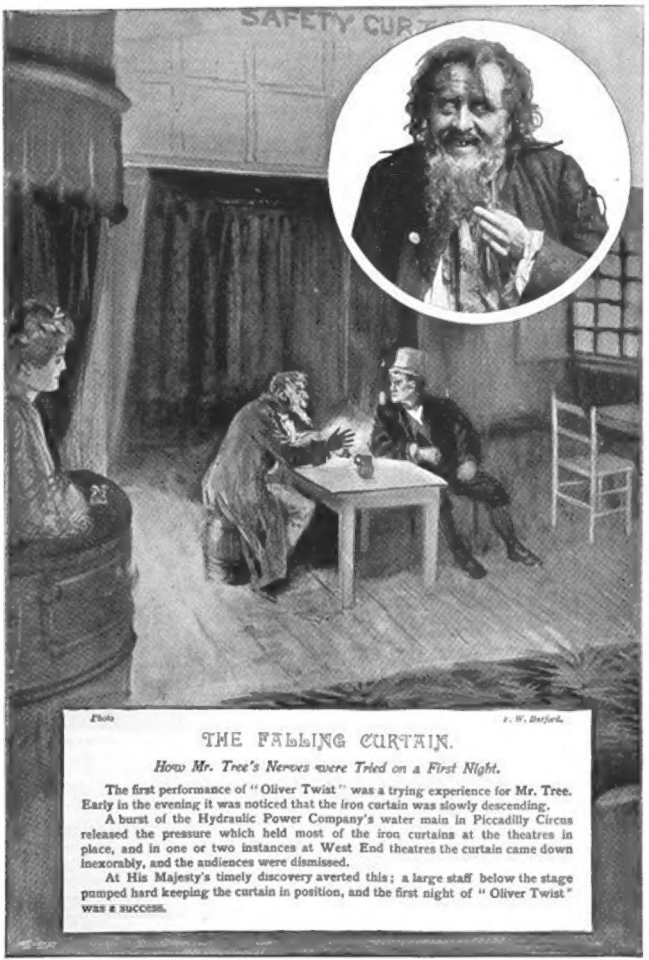


Photo F. W. Barford.

THE FALLING CURTAIN.

How Mr. Tree's Nerves were Tried on a First Night.

The first performance of "Oliver Twist" was a trying experience for Mr. Tree. Early in the evening it was noticed that the iron curtain was slowly descending.

A burst of the Hydraulic Power Company's water main in Piccadilly Circus released the pressure which held most of the iron curtains at the theatres in place, and in one or two instances at West End theatres the curtain came down inexorably, and the audiences were dismissed.

At His Majesty's timely discovery averted this; a large staff below the stage pumped hard keeping the curtain in position, and the first night of "Oliver Twist" was a success.

Digitized by Google

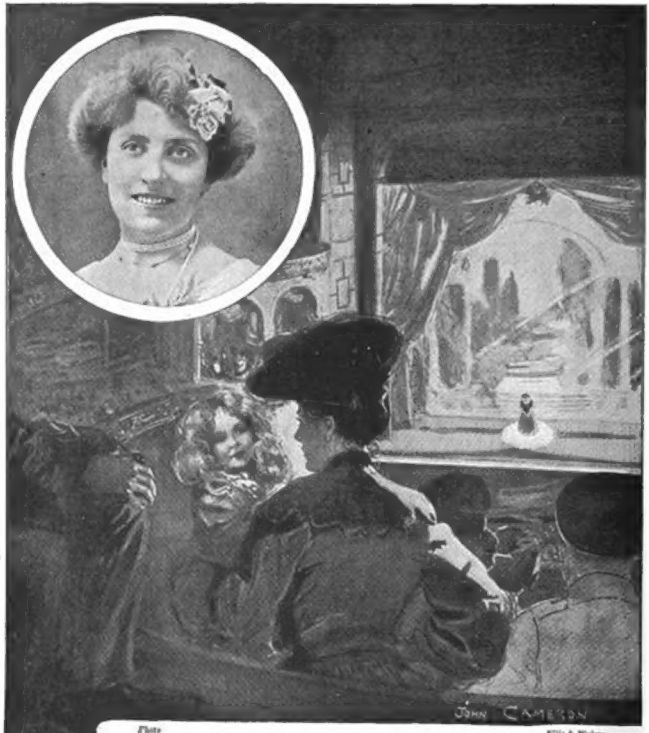


Photo Ellis & Walery.

UNAPPRECIATED TALENT.

A Child's Criticism of Miss Esmé Beringer.

Miss Esmé Beringer is famous as a fencer, and as a reciter of stirring poems.

An incident, amusing to the audience, and embarrassing to Miss Beringer, once happened at the Palace Theatre.

She had just given "Lasca," one of her finest recitations, and in response to a loud call, was about to give an encore, when a child's shrill voice was heard exclaiming: "Oh, mother, do tell her to stop, and let's have the performing dogs back again!"

Digitized by Google

Photo *Hills & Wainey.*

SCORCHED IN A SNOWBALL.

Mr. Edmund Payne's Narrow Escape.

Within the first five minutes of his professional career on the stage Mr. Edmund Payne came very near to losing his life.

It occurred in pantomime at the Corn Exchange, Market Harborough.

The first scene was entitled "The Elements," and Mr. Payne, inclosed in a circular wicker cage covered with cotton wool, took the part of a snowball.

A "super" thought it a humorous thing to give the novice a push with his foot.

Mr. Payne lost his balance and rolled rapidly down on to the footlights, or, rather, on to one of the oil lamps which served for the purpose.

The lamp was smashed, the wool caught fire, and Mr. Payne's hair and eyebrows were badly singed.

The blaze was smothered by some members of the company—and none too soon.

Digitized by Google

PUT TO FLIGHT BY A MOUSE.

An Awkward Moment for Miss Ada Reeve.

A little mouse caused all the trouble. Miss Ada Reeve was singing her song, "The Frills on the Petticoat," in "The Medal and the Maid," when she was not a little disturbed to hear the audience laugh heartily in the wrong place. Suddenly a chorus girl near her gave a subdued shriek and rushed off.

Miss Reeve looked round to see what was the matter, and there on the ground near her, playing about, was a mouse.

The mouse ran off, and curiously enough, the encore verse of the song was all about "the girl who displayed the frills she didn't wear," and the chorus girl of this episode did exactly the reverse.

Digitized by Google

OVERCOME BY A HAT.

The Sad Fate of Mr. Martin Harvey.

When Mr. Martin Harvey was in America he had a very funny experience.

In "A Cigarette Maker's Romance" he wore a hat of a certain shape. One evening it could not be found, but a makeshift was devised by padding one several sizes too large for him with paper.

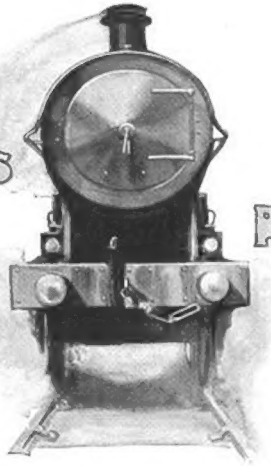
This was placed in the wings ready for Mr. Harvey's entrance.

Unfortunately a well-meaning scene-shifter removed the paper, thinking it had been stuffed in as a practical joke.

When Mr. Harvey's call came, he walked on the stage, and, putting on his hat, was completely extinguished.

Digitized by Google

STORIES OF THE RAILWAY.



ILLUSTRATED BY P. B. HICKLING.

BY VICTOR L. WHITECHURCH.

Thorpe Hazell, the Hero of this Series, is an Eccentric Individual whose Hobbies are Vegetarianism, Physical Exercise, and the Solving of Railway Mysteries. His Successful Unravelling of another Knotty Problem forms the Suoject of this Story.

VIII.—THE ADVENTURE OF THE PILOT ENGINE.

WHEN a special train is to be run on our railways, papers of directions are printed and issued to station-masters and others. These contain minute details concerning the timing of the run, and the keeping of the line clear, how this train is to be shunted into a refuge siding at one station, and that train has to be kept back at another point.

In the case of any important or Royal personage travelling, these instructions are marked "private," and are jealously guarded.

Some three years ago, at a juncture when European politics were considered by diplomatists to be in a very delicate state, an announcement might have been seen in several Continental papers to this effect: "Count von Neglein, being slightly indisposed owing to his arduous duties, has retired for a few days, under the direction of his physician, to his country house at B——. He hopes to be able to resume work in a week's time."

At the same time, a messenger from Downing Street called upon the general manager of the London and East Midland Railway and gave him an order with strict injunctions that the matter was to be kept private.

A special train was required the following Tuesday to run from London to Singlehurst. Every precaution was to be taken for the safety of this train, as a most important person was going to travel by it. The general manager immediately summoned the superintendent of the line, and before the morning was out a proof of the "special working instructions" had been laid on his desk, damp from the company's printers.

That same morning three men were closeted together in a house in the West End of London. Two of them were of a distinctly foreign appearance, the third might have belonged to any nationality. He was a man of medium height, clean-shaven, with close-cut hair, ordinary features, and mild-looking grey eyes. The only thing of any note about his face was a certain set and resolute compression of his lips.

The language in which the trio were speaking was French, and the subject under discussion was that of Count von Neglein's little indisposition.

Copyright, 1906, by C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., in the United States of America.

Digitized by Google

"The news is of the gravest character," said the elder of the two foreign-looking men. "There can be no doubt about it that if Count von Neglein has an interview with the English Prime Minister in the presence of the King during the ensuing week our plans will be frustrated completely."

"You are sure that your information is correct?" asked the other man.

"Positively. Besides, Dubourg here can corroborate it," and he turned to the third man.

"Quite correct," said Dubourg. "The Continental journey will be made to Ostend, and thence to London by private boat. These little steam yachts are handy."

"There is no possibility of, er—persuading the Count to relinquish his journey on the Continent or by sea?" said the first speaker, with a curious interrogatory lift of his eyebrows.

"None," replied Dubourg. "The arrangements are excellent—for them."

"Well, *you* ought to know something about that," said the second man.

Dubourg bowed slightly.

"It is my business," he said.

"The King," went on the first speaker, who was evidently the one in authority—"the King is staying with the Duke of Worcester, and will be there all next week. Singlehurst, I believe, is the nearest station. The Prime Minister and the French Ambassador are invited there to dine on Monday. That means staying the night."

"And that yacht will arrive early on Tuesday morning," put in Dubourg.

"Exactly. Well—er—my instructions are to prevent an interview between von Neglein and the Prime Minister at all costs. Now, Dubourg, what have you to say?"

Dubourg thought for a minute, his lips tightly compressed.

"We must find out," he said presently, "how he is going to travel from London to Singlehurst. If it is an ordinary train, as you know, I have done something in this line before. But if it is a special—well!"

"Well?"

"It may be a question of stopping at nothing."

"Then stop at nothing," said the chief coldly. "If he is removed altogether, so much the better for our interests."

"I will make inquiries and see you this evening," said Dubourg rising.

"Do so. Good-morning. A most excellent person this Dubourg," he went on to his companion, "he has been an engineer and an actor and he knows ten European languages fluently. If the thing's to be done at all, he's the man to do it—especially if it is a question of railways. That's his chief line."

The same evening Dubourg called again at the West End house. A dinner party was in progress, and the elder of the two foreigners sat at the head of the table, an order across his breast, and was addressed with much deference by his guests. As soon as the servant handed him Dubourg's card, he begged to be excused for a few moments, and left the table.

"Well?" he said to Dubourg, when they were seated in his private room.

Dubourg laid a printed paper on the table.

"It was difficult to get," he said, "but fortunately the printers were open to a fee."

The paper, which was marked "Strictly Private," was headed:

"Instructions for working special train from London to Singlehurst."

Then followed a long list of details. The train itself was to leave the London terminus at 8.30 a.m., preceded by a pilot engine at 8.20.

"They are taking extra precautions with that pilot engine," remarked Dubourg, with a light laugh.

The other looked at him narrowly.

"Why do you smile?"

"Because I think it would have been as well for Count von Neglein's restoration to health if they had not determined to run a pilot."

"It is going to be a serious affair?"

"Very serious. And dangerous—that is, if my plan is successful."

"And your plan?"

"No," replied Dubourg, "I won't give you the details, lest I should fail. But the key to it lies here."

And he put his finger on a paragraph of the "Instructions."

The other read:

"Inspector Inglis will travel on the engine of the express, which will be worked by Driver Forbes and Fireman Scott. The pilot engine will be worked by Driver Fraser and Fireman Norris."

"Four of the best enginemen on the line," remarked Dubourg. "I happened to see Driver Fraser and Fireman Norris bring a train in to-day—excellent men!"

"I don't see your point, but I know I can trust you. Koravitch, who was with us this morning, will give you any funds or assistance."

"I shall want the latter. To-morrow I am

going to make certain inquiries about Fireman Norris. I've taken quite a fancy to the look of him. On Monday I shall take a journey down the line, merely to refresh my memory of a few details. I shall be back that evening. If my little plan succeeds, I don't think there will be any interview. Good-night!"

* * * * *

Late on Monday evening, Dubourg sat in his lodgings poring over a rough map of a section of the London and East Midland line that he had made as the result of his trip that day, and referring closely to the "Special Working Instructions" that lay beside it on the table.

The first fifty miles of the London and East Midland consist of a quadruple track, the two main lines on the left for up and down fast trains, and the others "relief lines" for slow trains. There are places where a train can cross from the main line to the relief, or *vice versâ*, the points being, of course, controlled by signal-boxes; and there are also places where, for shunting purposes, a crossing-over place, when the "special" is timed to run by on the main line just at that moment.

The two special notices which Dubourg was studying so intently were these:

"Directions to the signalman on duty at Holt Box. Light engine No. 321, running on the up main to Rushwood, must stop opposite box, and the 9.5 local down passenger train from Rushwood must be stopped outside facing points on relief line during passing of pilot and special." A "light engine," by the way, is an engine running by itself.

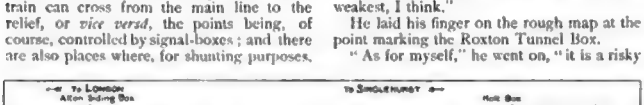
The man called Koravitch came in presently and glanced at the map.

"Well, Dubourg," he said, "is everything ready?"

"So far as it can be," replied the other. "There are several weak spots in the plan, but I must trust to luck. And here is the weakest, I think."

He laid his finger on the rough map at the point marking the Roxton Tunnel Box.

"As for myself," he went on, "it is a risky



Map showing the scene of Dubourg's plot.

trains can cross from the down line to the up, or *vice versâ*, but in this case they must first stop and then reverse.

Thirty-five miles down the line is Rushwood Station. Two and a half miles further is Alton Siding Box, which commands crossing points on the relief line only, the main line metals being clear. Five miles on is Holt Box, where points are so arranged that trains may cross in all the ways I have mentioned. Half-a-mile further is the long Roxton Tunnel, with a signal-box at the entrance.

When a train has passed the Roxton Box the man on duty signals "line clear" to Holt, and the signalman at Holt is free to admit a train on his section from Alton Siding Box.

In the case of very special trains, such as those carrying Royalty, and when a pilot engine is used, all traffic on the adjacent line must come to a standstill between the passage of the "pilot" and the "special" following it; while, with regard to trains running in the same direction on relief lines, a stop must be made for extra precaution wherever there is thing. After our little business of to-morrow morning you must start off with the motor. I want you to be waiting a little after nine on the main road just outside the village of Roxton, on the London side. Are all the other things ready?"

"Yes."

"The carriage?"

"Yes. Our men are warned."

"Good! Then we'll have some rest. Six o'clock to-morrow, mind. It'll be quite dark then."

* * * * *

About half-a-mile from the terminus of the London and East Midland Railway are a couple of streets of small houses belonging to the company, and entirely occupied by railway men. You may see them going in and out of their houses at all hours of the day or night. Drivers and firemen starting to "work" trains to the Midlands, goods brakesmen returning after a weary run up, smart guards, dingy engine-cleaners, the rank and file of the great railway army.

It was pitch dark on the morning of the

eventful Tuesday, when a closed carriage drove up to one of these little houses, and a man, with his cap drawn down over his face, sprang out and rapped violently at the door. The people were well accustomed to these sudden calls, especially in foggy weather. A minute later and a window opened, and a head appeared at it.

"Who's there?"

"Mr. Walters," growled the man below. "I want Norris at once."

"I'm Norris, sir."

"Sharp, then. You're firing the pilot for the special?"

"Yes, sir; but she don't start till 8.20."

"There's an alteration. Quick! Put on your clothes and hurry up!"

The window was shut down, and in a very few minutes Norris came out of the house, clad in his working clothes and ready for the "run," his little bag with provisions and the familiar blue tea-can in his hand.

"There's not a moment to lose," said the supposed Mr. "Walters," holding the door of the cab open. "Jump in—Fraser has gone on."

Norris got into the cab, and Dubourg, for it was he, followed. The driver whipped up his horse, and before the unfortunate fireman had realised what was happening, he found himself in the grasp of two powerful men, who snicked a pair of handcuffs on his wrists, and then proceeded to gag him.

"Now, if you keep still," said Dubourg, "we won't hurt you; but, if you make any resistance or refuse to do what we tell you, I can't answer for the consequences."

They drove along at a furious pace, and presently drew up at a house in Camden Town, the door of which opened immediately. Dubourg and Koravitch took the fireman by the arms and hurried him into the house, the door was closed by a third man, and the cab drove off.

The room into which they carried Norris was brilliantly lighted, and a looking-glass stood on the table. Dubourg lost no time.

"We're going to trouble you for your clothes, my friend," he said quietly, "and then you shall enjoy a rest."

In ten minutes the fireman had his outer clothes stripped from him and Dubourg had put them on. Then he opened a small tin case, took out a wig, some false hair, spirit gum, and other make-up materials, and set to work on his own face, carefully studying first Norris and then the reflection in the looking-glass. In a very short time he was transformed into the exact likeness of the fireman. By this time Koravitch had gone, but not before he had assisted the other man in binding Norris securely.

He laid his finger on the rough map at the point marking the Roxton Tunnel Box.

"Now," said Dubourg to Norris, as he put a small life-preserver in his own pocket and carefully examined a revolver, "you'll suffer no inconvenience beyond remaining here for a few hours. A letter will be posted to your wife stating where you are, and she'll receive it this afternoon. I'm sorry to leave you gagged, but there are neighbours who might hear you."

With that he walked out of the house with his fellow-conspirators.

* * * * *

Dubourg went his way to the engine-sheds of the London and East Midland Railway to all appearances an ordinary fireman, returning

nods of greeting which were given him by men he met.

He had served in the secret service of a powerful European nation for ten years now, and his chief work had been in connection with railways, steamers, and other methods of travelling. Railways and their working were his speciality, and, to a man who had driven locomotives scores of times, the details of a fireman's work were nothing. He knew exactly what was required, and gave in his name at the check office with as much unconcern as if he had been Norris himself, glancing at the notice board with quite a practised eye.

Fraser had arrived before him, and, lamp and oil-can in hand, was in the pit beneath the great engine, carefully inspecting every portion of the works. He gave a nod to his mate presently, as he joined him on the footplate; it was dark inside the engine-shed, and he did not notice anything strange.

Afterwards Dubourg took care to keep his face turned away from him as far as possible, besides which, it was a gloomy winter's morning, and men on the footplate have too much to do to look narrowly into each other's faces. Their eyes are fixed on other things, and driver and fireman on duty are not talkers. A dozen words in a hundred miles' run is often as much as they exchange.

Presently they "whistled up" to be run off the shed road, backed down to the "special," and stood at the end of the platform ready to start. Dubourg forgot nothing. He saw that the tail-light was properly fixed on the back of the tender—there were tunnels on the route—he placed the special head discs, denoting the character of the engine, in front of the smoke-box, and when a loco. inspector strolled up to the engine, he gave a twist to the hand-brake in the most approved manner.

Punctually to the minute they moved out. Dubourg stood slightly behind the driver, carefully noting the pressure-gauge, the needle of which soon began to move up as the blast operated. Directly the steam began to "blow off" at the valve he was ready for coaling. In a few seconds, as the needle began to go up once more, he commenced to put the feed on by setting the injector to work, screwing down the water-regulating wheel with such easy method and adjustment, that the driver's suspicions were never once aroused.

So the "pilot" ran on.

A dozen words had not been exchanged between the two men, so perfect was the working of both. Exactly at scheduled time they passed Rushwood, and the pseudo-fireman began to keep a sharp look out on his own account. At Holt Box he noted, with much satisfaction, that the local train stood on the "down relief," and the light engine on the "up main," according to instructions.

The half mile on to Roxton commenced with a sharp curve after leaving Holt, and through a deep cutting. One more coaling operation, and Dubourg had his hand in his pocket, grasping the life-preserver.

The instant the train had entered the tunnel he acted. With his left hand he dashed off Fraser's cap, standing behind him, and, at the same moment, struck him on the top of the head with his weapon. The driver, stunned with the blow, fell on the footplate like a log. Dubourg sprang to the regulator, shut off steam, and then put on the brake, the engine coming to a standstill in the tunnel.

Now came the ticklish part of his dastardly plan, and well he knew it. The signalman he had just passed at the mouth of the tunnel was like a sentry, to be overcome by foul means, before he could attain his object. But Dubourg was a man absolutely devoid of either fear or feeling.

Reversing his engine, he slowly backed out of the tunnel, stopping before the box, to the intense surprise of its occupant. The latter came rushing out on to the platform outside his door, first glancing to see that his signals were set against the "special."

"What's up?" he cried.

"This!" shouted Dubourg.

There was a sharp crack as his hand flew up with something glittering in it. The signalman staggered to his door, but fell on the threshold. Dubourg, calm as ever, lifted the insensible form of the driver and dropped him beside the track. Then he threw open the regulator and jumped off himself.

The engine began to move backwards.

Very coolly Dubourg mounted the steps of the signal box. He stooped to look at the man.

"H'm! Don't think I've killed him," he muttered.

Then he went into the box, deliberately selected an instrument, and gave the signal "Line clear" back to Holt Box.

And all the time that pilot engine was running back on the very metals over which the special was approaching. The signal that would have been given by the man on duty would have warned his colleague at Holt in time for him to clear off the light

There was a sharp crack as his hand flew up with something glittering in it.

engine which stood there to the "up relief," and cross the runaway engine over to the "up main." The next moment Dubourg was running across country to catch his motor and escape.

* * * * *

The signalman at Holt Box stood in front of his instruments, expecting every moment the sharp ring on his bell warning him from Alton Siding that the special was passing that point and entering upon the section between them. He never dreamt of any danger, having received the signal from Roxton Box that the line ahead was perfectly clear beyond that point.

Suddenly he heard a roar and a rattle round the curve and, as he glanced in that direction, his horrified gaze met the runaway pilot engine. Never was signalman placed in such an awful dilemma. The immediate danger crowded all else from his mind as he grasped a lever.

There flashed before him this:

If he set the crossing-points the pilot would crash into the light engine on the "up main." If he set the other points it would come into collision with the passenger train standing on the "down relief." There were but a few seconds in which to choose either course, and in his hesitation he lost them. The engine ran by both sets of points. At that moment there came the signal from Alton Siding Box:

"Train entering section."

Dubourg had made his calculations with diabolical cunning. For even if the special had not passed Alton Box, and it had been

possible to stop her there, unless she could have pulled up and backed into Rushwood in time, which was hardly likely, the smash would still have taken place, there being no crossing points at Alton over which the run-away engine could be switched.

The case stood thus: The special, with Count von Neglein aboard her, and the pilot engine were rushing towards each other on a five-mile stretch of line with absolutely no possibility of changing metals, the former travelling at fifty and the latter at forty miles an hour. Surely it seemed that Dubourg's diabolical plot could never be frustrated by human means.

But it was, through a page-boy in the first instance, and through Thorpe Hazell in the actual working.

It came about in this way. Hazell had had in his employment a sharp boy named Sam Thorne. Making a change, however, in his domestic establishment which led to the em-ployment of an older servant instead, this page-boy had left him and had taken a situa-tion in a large boarding-house in Bloomsbury, the very house, as it happened, where Dubourg had his apartments.

On the Monday night when Dubourg was discussing affairs with Koravitch, Sam Thorne came into the room with some hot water and glasses. He overheard Dubourg make a remark in which he caught the words "Holt Signal Box," and his quick eye caught sight of the map of the rail-way which was lying on the table and the words "Special Working Instructions" on the paper beside it. Neither of the men dreamt that the boy had noticed any-thing.

Now, while he had been in service with Hazell, Sam Thorne had gained a great admiration for his master as a railway expert, especially as, on one occasion, he had been made use of in finding out some little detail. He knew well how much Hazell loved getting hold of any mystery of the line.

The idea that something was up struck him forcibly, the fact that Dubourg had asked to be called at five o'clock exciting his sus-picions. He was a boy of strong imagination and of action, so he determined to put Hazell on the track. For this purpose he begged paper and envelope of the cook, and scrawled the following effusion:

DEAR SIR,

Two furrin men staying here are up to some-thing to morrow—I think about railways. Is there a place called Holt Signal Box on the London and East Midland? And they were looking at speshul working instruckshuns. I saw them, and I thought Ide let you no. Yours truely,

SAM THORNE.

It was nearly ten o'clock. Sam asked leave to post his letter, and as soon as he was outside the house he started off for Hazell's flat, taking a 'bus on the way. Here he found that Hazell was out of town, but had left his address with the porter. He was staying in the country at Holmfield.

"Better post it if it's particular. He'll get it to-morrow morning," said the man.

"It's very particular," replied the boy. "Give us a stamp, gov'nor."

He posted the letter, and received an awful wigging when he got back at half-past eleven. But he felt, somehow, that he had done his duty—even if the letter arrived too late.

As a matter of fact, Hazell got it at breakfast the next morning. He read it with a smile at first. Then he suddenly remembered that an official had told him the previous Saturday that a very important special was to be run that morning on the L. and E.M. He did not know, of course, who was to travel in it, but the mention of "two furrin men" aroused his suspicions.

Holmfield was a village in the heart of the country, devoid of railway or telegraph. But there was one point about the place—it was within fifteen miles of Roxton, and not much further, therefore, from Holt Box.

"Weston," exclaimed Hazell to his host, pulling out his watch at the same time, "you will have to excuse me, but this letter has dis-turbed me greatly. Will you lend me your bicycle and a local map? I want to be off in ten minutes."

The other, rather surprised, acquiesced, and in ten minutes Hazell was pedalling for all he was worth on the Roxton Road, keen on discovery, but little dreaming what was before him.

After riding some fifteen miles he deviated from the main road by a turning that his map showed him would lead him along the line close by Holt Box. He reached the top of a little hill commanding a view of the railway, and as he did so he saw the pilot engine run through. He could also discern the stationary train and light engine, and these facts told him at once that the engine running through must be the pilot of a special. He wondered, as he rode on, whether anything really was likely to happen, or whether he had only had a false alarm. Presently he arrived opposite Holt Box—which was on the further side of the line—got off his bicycle, and climbed the

Hazell grasped the handrails and calculated the distance. Then he gave a forward spring.

railing. He was now exactly opposite the light engine.

At that moment he saw what the terrified signalman had grasped—the reversed pilot engine running back. He even heard the two strokes of the bell that announced to his practised ear the entering of the special on the same section, and he knew in an instant the awful danger. An idea swept upon him like an inspiration. Dashing over the metals he made for the light engine, climbed the foot-plate, and cried to the astonished driver:

"Open the regulator—quick—brakes off, fireman. We can save her!"

He had seized the regulator himself as he spoke, and the engine had already begun to move, the fireman mechanically taking off the brake, the driver standing dumb-stricken.

"*Overtake her!*" yelled Hazell, pointing towards the retreating pilot.

Then the driver grasped his meaning.

"It's an awful risk," he cried, as he took the regulator, "steady mate"—to the fireman—"don't coal her, man, yet—for Heaven's sake. We shall want all our steam."

"How long have we got?" asked Hazell.

"Two minutes at the outside," replied the man; "will you do it, sir—or shall I?"

"I will."

"It's dangerous—fearful."

"I know. Go on!"

The driver carefully "notched up" with his reversing wheel, and got her out of "full throw" as the speed increased. The pilot had a fair start, and nearly six hundred yards separated them now. He and Hazell looked grimly ahead. The distance between the engines gradually grew less. The driver glanced at his watch.

"Half a minute gone!"

Then he muttered:

"She's not running more than forty; she's in full gear, thank God!"

Which means that the pilot's cylinders were fully open to steam, and that, at the speed at which she was running, the strokes of the piston were somewhat retarded.

Another thirty seconds passed in anxious silence. At length there were only fifty yards between the engines.

"Look out, sir!" cried the driver.

"What are you going to do, sir?" asked the fireman, speaking for the first time.

"Jump!" said Hazell.

"You *can't*, sir!"

"I'll try, anyway," replied Hazell, going to the side. Twenty seconds more and the two engines were running side by side.

"Keep her so, driver! Steady!"

At length the footplates were opposite, some three feet of space separating them. Hazell grasped the handrails and calculated the distance. Then he gave a forward spring and landed fair on the pilot's step, clutching at her handrail.

"Thank God!" he cried as he flew at the regulator, closed it, and turned on the brake.

Then he glanced over his shoulder.

Not a quarter of a mile behind the special suddenly came round a slight curve. There was a furious whistling, then the white steam was shut off, and a minute later the train had stopped, barely a hundred yards from the engine that had so nearly destroyed her.

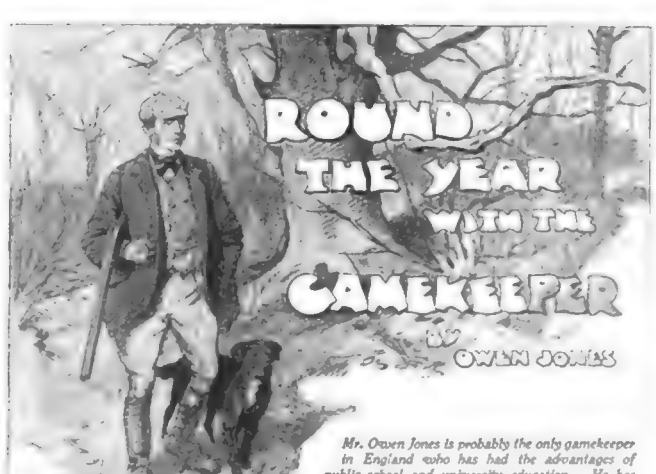
* * * * *

The affair was hushed up. The loco. inspector and Driver Hicks, of the light engine, went forward with the pilot, while the light engine was run on to Rushwood by her fireman. Hazell accompanied him, and took train to Roxton to recover his bicycle—walking out to Holt Box afterwards.

Von Neglein only knew that "a block had occurred on the line," and his views of English railways were rather lowered in consequence.

The signalman at Roxton and the driver of the pilot both recovered, an important treaty was duly signed, and a "diplomatic triumph" ensued.

Dubourg was never discovered, in fact, the police received an intimation that it was useless to pursue their "clues," and the railway officials in high places were also advised to hold their tongues. So they did. As to Hazell, he was warmly thanked by the superintendent of the line, and Driver Hicks was substantially rewarded for the part he had played in what might have been an awful tragedy.



Mr. Owen Jones is probably the only gamekeeper in England who has had the advantages of public school and university education. He has become a past master in every phase of gamekeeping during the ten years that he has spent as head-keeper to Sir Richard Rycroft, Bart., Hampshire. No one could be better qualified to tell the romantic and adventurous story of a keeper's life.

A KEEPER'S CALENDAR.

February .	Pheasants to be caught and penned for stock.
March ...	Rabbits to be killed. Vermin to be destroyed.
April	Early pheasant eggs to be found. Egg-stealers to be expected.
May	Young rooks to be shot. Early pheasants to be tended.
June	Pheasant rearing season in full swing. Young partridges hatch. Young rabbits to be shot.
July	Young pheasants to be removed to covers. Harvesting begins, and game in cornfields must be protected.
August ...	Duck shooting begins. Grouse shooting begins in the north.
September.	Early partridge shooting begins.
October ...	Shooting season sets in in earnest. Great pheasant shoots and partridge drives to be planned. Poachers to be expected from now onwards.
November .	Shooting season in full swing.
December..	Christmas shooting parties to be planned.
January...	The shooting season wanes, and the keeper's duties lighten for a brief space until the round begins again.

THE sportsman regards game from one standpoint—the destructive. So long as birds are plentiful, and sport is good, he is content. But the keeper's point of view is far wider—he is concerned not only with the destructive side of game, but with the productive. And it calls for a good deal more skill to rear a pheasant than it does to shoot it!

During one half of the year the keeper thinks only of how many birds he can raise. On his little pheasants he lavishes all his loving care, tending them more faithfully than would

Copyright, 1906, by C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., in the United States of America.

their own mothers. Then, in the latter half of the year, his view-point swings completely round, and by every means in his power he strives to bring his birds to death and destruction—to put them on his game-book!

In February there comes often a cold snap of weather. Now is the time to catch pheasants for stock—to lay the foundation-stone of the year's work, and of the shooting season that will set in nine months later.

I go about my woods trap-setting. The trap is a wooden, roomy affair, in which I place an enticing supply of food, for some time without setting the trigger that will cause the cage to fall over the pheasant. I set traps of wire netting, which work on the principle of a lobster-pot. The pheasants run in, and cannot run out again. These traps will contain several birds at once, and are always set.

The trapping is really all for the good of the birds. For, when I have caught them, I put them safely into pens, where they are secure from thieves, human or otherwise. No prowling stoat or rat can touch their eggs.

As the eggs are laid I collect them, and put them by, and the hen-pheasants, finding themselves robbed, go on laying, until they produce double as many as they would if wild. Then, when I have collected a goodly store of eggs to set under fowls, each bird is given back her liberty, and goes off to make a new wild nest.

Thus the keeper assists Nature.

Rabbits, left to themselves, soon become a pest, gnawing underwood, burrowing everywhere. One of my earliest tasks in a year is to kill down the rabbits, leaving only a sufficient stock to insure good sport later on.

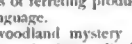
On a day in March, armed with a gun, accompanied by my ratting terrier, and assistants carrying ferrets in a bag, nets, and spades, I cautiously approach the rabbits' burrows, moving up wind with a minimum of noise. The terrier, running ahead, points to the holes where the rabbits are. These are quickly netted. A ferret is put down a hole, and, with ear to the ground, I listen for the excited rumblings and rushings telling that the rabbits are on the move—lying so low that no part of me is visible, should a rabbit pause at a hole's mouth before bolting.

Soon all is excitement underground—scared rabbits are frantically flying before the ferret, and one after another darts for the open, only to find himself entangled in the nets, where his neck is broken by a pair of strong hands, before he knows what has happened. Or, if the net should fail to hold a rabbit, the terrier is in readiness to pounce upon him, before he shakes himself quite free.

Good ferrets work for the love of the sport. Some grow very knowing, and, when they have made all the rabbits bolt from a burrow, refuse to go in again. Apart from their work, they are not the ferocious brutes that most people suppose—indeed, the keeper's child regards them as pets.

A good day's ferreting will produce one hundred rabbits. In the course of a season I kill in all about one thousand. In some seasons rabbits will bolt freely when attacked by ferrets; in others, they will refuse to budge, are sluggish, and give no sport. This is generally in wet seasons, when the sodden earth does not carry sound, and the rabbits, deep down, are not disturbed by the ferret's approach. I once dug out twelve rabbits, all huddled together, just as they had been sleeping when the ferret sprang among them. Such slow days of ferreting produce little but unprintable language.

A curious woodland mystery is the fact that, whenever one begins to dig for a rabbit, there appears on the scene a robin!



March ushers in the great time for trapping the vermin. The birds and beasts of prey are less suspicious then, and I must avail myself of every chance to kill. A record of vermin killed on one big estate in a year reads as follows: Jays, 350; magpies, 160; crows, 150; squirrels, 140; weasels, 80; cats, 70; stoats, 60; hedgehogs, 40; hawks, 30; total, 1080. This gives an idea of the number of a keeper's foes.

Were not the fox a sporting animal, he would easily hold first place among vermin.

Throughout March I set baited traps in the hedgerows and woods, and shoot the game-thieves whenever occasion offers. Stoats are among the most difficult of vermin to catch—their cunning and fecundity is so great that I think they will never become extinct. Cats do endless damage—though I protest that it is not fair to give the keeper the credit of slaying *every* cat that disappears in his neighbourhood.

One keeper—not myself, I beg to state—was once greatly troubled by the herds of cats from a lane of cottages near his preserves. When his wife bought a dozen red herrings,

an inspiration came to him. In the evening, he sent out an underkeeper, with the twelve herrings and with twelve traps, telling him to set the traps, baited with the fish, in the woods.

Next morning, he had caught a dozen cats.

A sunny morning in April. I am strolling, gun on arm, up a hedgeside, when something catches my eye—some slight scratchings and rubbings. A little sign—but one that brings gladness to my heart, for it shows me that my pheasants are beginning to think of laying. And there is to me no moment in all the year so full of charm as when I find my first wild pheasant's egg.

And now begins the most delightful of all my duties—searching the ground for wild eggs. Left to themselves, wild birds lay about ten to fifteen eggs—but when the eggs are regularly collected, they will lay up to thirty. Several hens sometimes lay in one nest, which is disastrous to successful hatching, since quarrels ensue. I have found in one nest no fewer than fifty-two eggs, including pheasants', partridges', turkeys', fowls', and guinea-fowls'.

Now the human egg-stealer begins to play his risky game—not always successfully.

In June young rabbits have to be shot, in order to keep down their numbers.

A tramp was once so bold as to bring me a whole kettleful of stolen pheasants' eggs, with the request that I should buy them. To his dismay, I was able to point out on each egg a private mark of my own, proving that the eggs had been stolen from my nests.

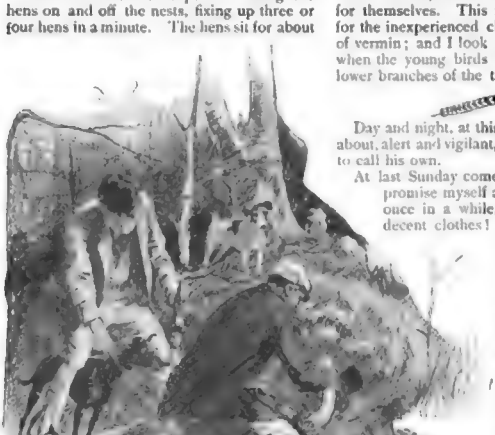
The eggs collected from the wild nests are added to those taken from the captured pheasants in their pens; and when I have enough in hand I turn the pheasants loose, and call upon my broody chicken hens to play their part.

In pheasant rearing one of the first things to do is to lime-wash the nest-boxes. There are several hundred wooden boxes to be made ready for nests, built in long rows, each compartment measuring 15in. square. The boxes I place in lines, either in a shed or in an open field; and in each one I put a piece of turf and some soil, and roughly fashion a nest, lined with moss and hay, on which I rest later from seventeen to twenty eggs.

I have collected already a number of healthy, broody hens to act as foster-mothers to the baby pheasants when they have hatched them; and I now set the hens on the nests in the boxes. At regular periods the hens must be lifted off their nests, to be fed and watered,

and to allow oxygen to get to the eggs. Before each nest a heap of soaked corn and a pan of water are made ready. To a rope that runs on the ground in front of the boxes each hen, in turn, is tethered, remaining off the nest for from ten to fifteen minutes at first, to forty minutes at a time, when the eggs are nearly ready to hatch.

One soon becomes expert in lifting the hens on and off the nests, fixing up three or four hens in a minute. The hens sit for about twenty-four days and if 85 per cent. of the eggs hatch out, that I consider good.



From October onwards, night-poachers are to be expected.

The little chicks, so soon as they are dry and strong, are taken with the hens to coops placed in readiness in the rearing-field.

Four or five times a day the little pheasants must be fed—their meals consisting at first chiefly of eggs to which is added, later, biscuit-meal, rice, greaves, and small bird-seed. I study carefully the insect supply in the field, and if it is deficient, add a little meat to the diet. Later on, boiled corn becomes the staple food.

Every night, while the chicks are young, they must be carefully shut up in their coops—a long and tiresome job, for it is easier to shut the chicks out than in. There is great danger now from disease, especially enteritis, which sweeps off young chicks by the hundred—I have lost nine thousand in one week.

When five or six weeks old, the chicks and hens in their coops are carted away in waggons to the woods, where they soon learn to shift for themselves. This is an anxious period, for the inexperienced chicks are at the mercy of vermin; and I look anxiously for the time when the young birds first flutter up to the lower branches of the trees, to roost at night.

Day and night, at this period, the keeper is about, alert and vigilant, with never a moment to call his own.

At last Sunday comes—in the afternoon I promise myself a rest. What a relief, once in a while, to put on a suit of decent clothes! But no sooner do I begin to change than I spy, afar off, a party of ladies from the house, in gorgeous raiment, coming out to inspect my birds—"the sweet little darling pheasants."

Out I rush, to save, if I can, a few birds for the guns—but well I know that a score or more will be missing before night. Under my lady's high heels many a little bird, hidden and invisible in the long grass, is crushed to death—and the grass hides all sign of the slaughter. The birds, scared half to death, scatter in all directions. Even a change in the colour of my gaiters is enough to frighten baby pheasants: how much more the ladies' flaming costumes!

Many chicks run to the wrong coops, where they are pecked to death by angry, jealous hens. And those birds which are so lucky as to escape the ladies' heels are snapped up by their wretched pet dogs.

Throughout May, June, and July the keeper's lot is one of incessant anxiety—anxiety that does not cease until the long-tails hang safely in his larder. Just when

pheasant rearing is at its height, the partridges begin to hatch in great numbers, and the keeper goes in dread of heavy thunderstorms, that may well rob him of hundreds of eggs and young.

Haymaking begins towards the end of June, and I must keep a sharp eye on the mowers, to discover any partridge nests that are laid bare in the fields. When the mother partridge is disturbed by the mowing-machine, she is either cut by the knives, or runs off, never to return to her nest—leaving her eggs on the keeper's hands, to rear as best he may. Eggs or young birds thus brought to light, I distribute in other nests; and I need have no fear of giving the hen birds too much to look after, since the cock birds are excellent "mothers" themselves, and do their full share of sitting.

Haymaking gives way to harvesting; and now it is added to my duties to see that the game in the harvest fields is properly protected. As the last swathes of a cornfield are cut, leverets sometimes come pouring out, in tens and twenties at a time; I have seen so many as four hundred in one field, offering no small temptation to the harvesters.

Work is so heavy at this season—what with feeding young pheasants three times a day, shutting them in at night, moving the older ones from coop to cover, tending the wild partridges, guarding hayfields and cornfields, and shooting young rabbits for the house between whiles—that I have a little hut built on the pheasant ground, and banish the thoughts of my humble home.

Though partridge shooting does not begin in earnest until October, on September 1st a quiet walk is usually taken round the outside preserves with the youthful generation, and a few brace of birds are shot for the house.

The First is a long day for me. Early in the morning I am out in distant woods feeding the pheasants; then home to breakfast, after which boots must be cleaned, guns polished, dogs fed, brushed, and smartened, and a start made to meet the party for the day's sport. All day we walk up partridges; then the birds in the woods must be fed and tended at night, the guns again must be cleaned, the dogs again fed. It is a consolation that by September all except very

In November, the shooting season is in full swing.

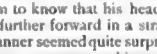
late pheasants have learnt to go to roost in trees.

Some of the rising gunners to whom one shows the ropes on the First are delightfully simple. Once a rabbit got up and went away from under the very feet of a young sportsman, his white tail a beacon in the underwood. To my surprise, no shot hailed the rabbit's appearance.

"Why ever didn't you blaze at him?" I asked.

"Oh," came the reply, "I only saw his tail."

And when I explained at length that if one can see a rabbit's tail, it does not call for any great wisdom to know that his head is about nine inches further forward in a straight line, the young gunner seemed quite surprised at my skill in putting two separate things together.



A dark night in October. I am comfortably asleep in my bed, when suddenly, in my dreams, I hear a man dash up to my window, crying: "There be a strong gang of poachers at work in the Long Wood, Mister Jones—come as quick as you can!"

It is one of my half dozen night-watchers who has given the alarm. Dressing in a flash, I take a stout ash stick—a little heavier at one end than such sticks generally are—and within two minutes we are tearing down the pitch-black lane. At two cottages, where men live whom I can rely upon for help in an emergency, we stop for reinforcements; and then away we rush for the Long Wood, running as silently and swiftly as heavy, bob-nailed boots will allow.

"Hist!"

We are in the wood now, and a man's running steps are coming towards us.

"Stand back a moment," I whisper, and crouch down in the middle of the path. The man comes tearing through the darkness—charges straight at me—falls headlong; and in a trice three men are sitting on his chest, while the fourth is slipping a pair of handcuffs round his wrists. Poacher number one is a prisoner—evidently the gang has taken the alarm and is running for it.

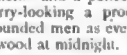
But no! A shot rings out ahead, shouts arise, dogs bark savagely—the poachers are making a fight. Leaving the prisoner bound, we rush away.

"Come on! Here they be!" cries one of my men, throwing caution to the winds; and in another moment we are in the thick of it.

One glance takes in the whole scene. In the middle of a clearing, a bunch of men—watchers and poachers—are wrestling and struggling in a desperate *mêlée*. One groaning form lies apart on the ground. My gallant night-dog is springing for the throat of one of the men, who is crouching with a net upheld, ready to inmesh him; while, a little apart from the central group, an underkeeper has a poacher by the throat, and is trying to trip his legs from beneath him and force him to the ground. And behind the keeper I see a stealthy form, swinging a long stocking, at the end of which is a heavy stone—the poacher's deadliest weapon.

All this is seen in a flash—and there is no doubt as to where my help is most required. I spring for the man with the stocking, and my ash stick descends on his hand as he is in the act of bringing down his weapon on the underkeeper's head. In a trice, my arms are slipped beneath his from behind, and my hands are locked at the back of his neck. I have him fast in the strongest grip I know, and, if I please, I can break his back as easily as if it were a rabbit's.

The underkeeper by now has his man on his back; my companions have leapt into the *mêlée*, and made a short end to that desperate struggle; while the night-dog, rolling on the ground, is tearing savagely and helplessly at the meshes of the net. We have bagged five out of six poachers—and a policeman takes charge of as sorry-looking a procession of battered and wounded men as ever marched through a dark wood at midnight.



October and November pass away in a succession of big shoots, on which my hopes and fears have hung for so many long months; and my stock of partridges and pheasants dwindles to the vanishing point. December brings the schoolboys home, and small shoots are the order of the day, until the Christmas party gathers at the house; but the remaining birds have not so much to fear, for late balls, and hunting, and the season's festivities are not without their effect on the sportsman's aim.

The season ends with a rabbit-shooting party that is all my own, to which the tenants on the estate and my personal friends are invited; and when these professional guns get to work—woe to the rabbits!

And now, for a little space, I may rest from my labours.

How to Propose

An Absurdity in One Act.

By O. Percy Martin.

Characters:

Jack Jackson. Tom Tomson. Dick Dickson.

Scene.—*Jack's Diggings. Time, the Present. It is a comfortably furnished room. Door R. to the stairs. Door L. to the bedroom. Table R., on which is a lighted lamp, and which is covered with books, papers, etc. There are several arm-chairs, and the walls are hung with pictures of a sensational type. When the curtain rises,* Jack Jackson *is discovered writing at the table R. He is a pale, poetical-looking youth, clean-shaven, but with very long hair, through which he constantly runs his fingers. He wears a very low turn-down collar with a very large, floppy green tie, and is clad in a dressing-gown. He also wears red socks and carpet slippers. He gesticulates freely when he speaks.*

Jack. That's better, I think. Let's see how it goes now. (*Rises and reads from a sheet of MS.*)

"When thou art in the moonlight, love,
The moon dares shine no more,
The stars seem dim beside thine eyes;
For thee my soul for ever cries
As ne'er it cried before."

(*While he is reading the last two lines the door R. opens, and* Tom Tomson *enters. He is a foppish-looking young man, with a terribly high collar, and an eyeglass. He has on a perfectly-fitting dress-suit, and carries his overcoat over one arm, and his hat in his hand. He drawls when he speaks, and pronounces his "r's" like "w's."* Jack *does not hear him enter, so* Tom *puts his hat down on the table with a bang.*)

Jack (*looking round and seeing* Tom). Hullo, Tom, how are you?

Tom. Very fit, thank you, Jack, old man. And you?

Jack (*giving* Tom *a chair, and taking his overcoat from him*). I'm the same. What an age it is since I saw you last! I thought you'd forgotten the way here! (*Offers* Tom *cigarette.*) And very pleased I am to see you. I was only talking to Dick about you the other day. (Jack *sits. Both smoke.*)

Tom. How is old Dick? I've not seen him for a long time.

Jack. He's all right. You know he lives

Copyright, 1906, by C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., in the United States of America.

just above me now. I'd fetch him down to see you, only I fancy he's gone out.

TOM. It's just as well.

JACK. Why? Surely you've not quarrelled with Dick!

TOM. No. But I want to see you alone.

JACK. Want some more advice, eh? (TOM *nods*). Who's the charmer this time? I suppose—er—Susie is quite "off" now.

TOM. Oh, yes! Susie was "off" a long time ago.

JACK. As this one will be a short time hence.

TOM. Not at all. This one is the one.

JACK. That's what you say every time.

TOM. But I really mean it this time. I'm quite positive about it.

JACK. What makes you so certain?

TOM. Well, you see, I always feel so fearfully nervous when I'm with her.

JACK. And you think that's a sure sign that the charmer has come at last?

TOM. Exactly. You see, with all the others I've never had the slightest difficulty in making love to them; but with this one I'm so afraid of offending her that I dare not broach the subject.

JACK. What subject?

TOM. Marriage, of course.

JACK (*laughing*). Oh! it's as bad as that, is it? This is very serious. And you mean to say that you can't pluck up enough courage to ask her to fly with you?

TOM. I don't want her to fly with me. If only she'll marry me, that's all I want.

JACK. You'll find it quite enough, if not too much!

TOM. Bah! Your cynicisms don't touch me. She is my sole desire!

JACK. I hope you'll attain her.

TOM. I'm afraid I shan't without your help.

JACK. Do you want me to pop the question for you?

TOM. By no means. Of course, I want to ask her myself.

JACK. It is better, perhaps; most girls prefer it, I believe. Then how can I help you?

TOM. I want you to give me a few hints as to how to propose to her.

JACK. You've come to the right man. If I don't put you on the high road to success, my name's not Jack Jackson. First of all, I must just ask you one question.

TOM. Fire away.

JACK. What kind of a girl is she?

TOM. As beautiful as the day, as sweet-tempered as an angel, and as loving——

JACK (*interrupting*). Yes, yes, of course, I know she's all that. What I mean is, what kind of temperament has she?

TOM. I don't quite understand.

JACK. In other words, what method of proposing do you think would be most likely to capture her?

TOM. I'm afraid I don't quite understand what you mean by method of proposing.

JACK. Tom, my boy, I see you're a baby in these little matters. To think that you don't even know the various ways there are of asking a girl to be your wife!

TOM. I had no idea there were various ways.

JACK. Then I will just run over them quickly, and you must tell me which you think will suit your case best.

TOM. All right.

JACK. First of all, there is the Common or Garden Proposal, which, I am glad to say, is rapidly dying out. Then there is the Plaintive Proposal, the Nonsensical, the Suicidal, the Commercial or Mutual Advantage, and lastly the Romantic or Artistic.

TOM. I had no idea it was such a scientific and varied subject.

JACK. That's where most people—like you—make the mistake. It is a subject—I should say an art—which is quite unbounded.

TOM. You seem to have studied it up.

JACK. I have.

TOM. Are there books on it, then?

JACK. No; at least, not any of any use. I hope, however, to remedy that soon.

TOM. How?

JACK. I intend shortly publishing a little volume. It will be a most useful work to all who are about to propose. Unfortunately, I have not quite finished it yet, or I would let you see it. You would find it most interesting.

TOM. I'm sure I should. What's it called?

JACK. "Proposals, and How to Make Them."

TOM. Sounds rather like a cookery book.

JACK. It is arranged not unlike one. For instance, there will be different recipes: "How to propose to a rich girl," "How to propose to a shop girl"—and all the other kinds of girls. Then at the end of the book there will be a separate chapter devoted to each of the six various methods.

TOM. I understand.

JACK. Now, which of them do you think will suit your requirements best?

TOM. Well, you see, I hardly know the exact difference between them.

JACK. But their names practically give them away. Take, for instance, the suicidal. After revealing your passion, before the girl has time to accept or refuse you, you wildly declare that unless she immediately consents to become your own, you will kill yourself in her presence. It is a most effective way with a certain class of girl. I have made use of it myself, any number of times, with the most gratifying success.

TOM (*astonished*). Any number of times?

JACK. Yes. You see, I make it a rule to ask at least one girl a week to marry me.

TOM. But what do you do if they accept you? I suppose they do sometimes.

JACK. Oh! yes, always. You may not believe it, Tom, but I have never had a single refusal.

TOM. But how do you manage being accepted by all these different girls? You can't be engaged to all of them at the same time.

JACK. Oh! that's a very simple matter. They generally get tired of me before a week is up. You see, I only propose to a girl for the sake of seeing what kind of effect it has on her, so when once I have been accepted, I don't make any attempt to retain her affection. Rather, I might say, I try to damp it—to choke it off.

TOM. But don't you think it rather a caddish trick to propose to all these girls without the slightest intention of marrying them?

JACK. Not at all. I am, you must remember, an artist. Only mine happens to be the gentle art of proposing. An artist places his art above everything. He is willing—if he be a true artist—to sacrifice anything, everything for it. His friends, his nearest and dearest relations—even his mother-in-law—all are but secondary considerations with him. I have even heard of artists who were willing to sacrifice themselves for their art, but I don't think that I would go quite so far as that myself.

TOM. Heaven save me from artists! They must be a bad lot!

JACK. But you have not yet told me what method of proposing you think will meet your case.

TOM. Well, I'm not quite certain.

JACK. Why not try the Nonsensical?

TOM. I don't quite like the sound of that.

JACK. How about the Mutual Advantage?

TOM. How does that work?

JACK. Very well, indeed, with some girls. You simply say: "I'm not a bad sort of a chap, I've a nice little income, and I'm very fond of you. I feel sure you would make a very good wife, as you can cook and——"

TOM (*interrupting*). No, no, that would never do. It's much too prosaic.

JACK. In that case then I must recommend the Romantic or Artistic. It is a way which I have raised to the very pinnacle of perfection, and I flatter myself that it will meet with the approval of the most fastidious.

TOM. Can you guarantee that it is a successful way?

JACK. With the utmost confidence, although, up to the present, I have never made use of it myself.

TOM. Why not?

JACK. Because, until a couple of weeks ago, I had never met a girl whom I considered worthy of this supreme honour!

TOM. Honour?

JACK. Surely you're aware of the fact that a man always honours a woman by asking her to be his wife?

TOM. Even if he doesn't mean it?

JACK. Yes, even so. Therefore I say, "supreme honour" advisedly, for the artistic is the supreme way of asking. It is worthy of the most noble, the most chivalrous, even of the most poetic. (*Bowing.*)

TOM (*slapping him on the back*). Then that is the way for me.

JACK (*shaking Tom's hand*). I'm very pleased to hear it.

TOM. Will you tell me how to do it?

JACK. Nothing could possibly give me greater pleasure. I have been rehearsing it regularly for the last week, so as to be quite proficient in it.

TOM. How do you rehearse it?

JACK. I practise proposing to the bolster.

TOM (*astonished*). The bolster!

JACK. Yes. And I think that I am not over boastful when I say that I have practised to such an extent that I shall be quite irresistible when I really make use of it, which—I don't mind telling you—I have fully determined to do to-morrow.

TOM. I sincerely hope you will be.

JACK. Thanks. Now I will just run and fetch the lady, and then we can get to work. (*Goes off through door L.*)

TOM. I wish I could feel irresistible.

(JACK *re-enters L., carrying a bolster clothed in a dressing-gown, which he places in a chair.*)

JACK. This will be a proper dress rehearsal to-night. If you sit over there, Tom, you will get the best view, I think. (TOM *sits*

R. JACK *sits L. The bolster is C.*) Now I must ask you not to speak to me when once I have started, as I want to forget everything except the fact that I am asking this lady to be my wife.

TOM. Very well, I will keep quite quiet.

JACK. Thank you. By the way, Tom, Miss Brown—as I will call her—and myself have been sitting talking together for some time on various subjects, such as books. With a pretty skill, that I possess—as you doubtless know—I turn the conversation to poetry. (*Drawing his chair nearer to the bolster.*) Miss Brown, do you remember that little poem you advised me to read the last time we were together? What a beautiful little thing it was! It fired me to write a few lines; you'd like to hear them? No, no, they are not worthy of so great an honour. Still, as you really seem to wish it, I will repeat them. I bid you remember, though, that in spite of their inferiority they come straight from my soul.

"When thou art in the moonlight, love,
The moon dares shine no more,
The stars seem dim beside thine eyes;
For thee my soul for ever cries
As ne'er it cried before."

It is very kind of you to say you think them lovely. I wish I could think so. Do you know, Miss Brown, I have never met anyone like you before? You inspire me to noble deeds. Before I met you I had no aim in life; now I have ambition. One thought is ever in my mind. One goal is there to which I am ever eagerly pressing. You are my goal, my ambition. In you alone can I find true happiness. Our souls are attuned, it is ordained that I should ever love you. (*Dropping on to one knee.*) Let me ever bask in your ethereal smiles, let me ever gaze into your cerulean eyes, in whose liquid depths, methinks, I can read your very soul. Maggie. (TOM *gives a slight start.*) Maggie, I love you. Say but that you love me. What need for you to speak? I read your answer in your eyes. Some mysterious feeling within me tells me that you are mine. Your lips, Maggie, your lips, I say. Let me sip their divine nectar. (*Seizes the bolster in his arms and kisses it, then throws it down with an expression of disgust.*) Ugh!

TOM (*jumping up*). Whatever's the matter?

JACK. I so far forgot myself that I actually kissed the beastly thing.

TOM. You did it rippingly, old man.

JACK. I'm glad you liked it.

TOM. I thought it simply grand. You take it for granted that she loves you.

JACK. Could she do otherwise? But you think it will suit you?

TOM. Admirably.

JACK. Of course, you will have to practise it up a good deal. Still, you will have got some idea now of how it is to be done.

TOM. Rather.

JACK. Well, then, suppose you try to do it now.

TOM. Oh! but I can't.

JACK. Nonsense, man. It will do you no end of good, besides showing me exactly what you're capable of.

TOM. Very well, then.

JACK (*replacing the bolster in chair C.*). Now then, Miss Brown, I must ask you to sit quite still while Mr. Tomson asks you to be his wife.

TOM (*sitting L.*). I shall feel such a perishing idiot proposing to that thing.

JACK. But you must endeavour to forget that it is not really the girl of your choice. (*Sits R.*) Now, then, fire away.

TOM. Shall I say exactly what you did?

JACK. If you can remember it.

TOM (*to the bolster*). Since I last saw you, Miss Brown, I have written a little poem. May I recite it to you? Ah, thank you; you are very kind:

"When thou art in the sunlight, dear——"

(*to Jack*) I can't remember all that rot, I mus——

JACK (*angrily*). Rot! It's not rot. It's poetry.

TOM. It comes to the same thing.

JACK. You're a heathen!

TOM. I must learn up some short verse, I suppose.

JACK. Learn one up! You must make one up.

TOM. But I couldn't if I tried. I know what, Jack, will you write one for me?

JACK. I don't mind looking up one of my earlier efforts for you.

TOM. Thanks, old man; I shall be awfully obliged. Let's see, how far had I got? Oh, I know? We'll suppose I've finished the recitation.

JACK. Recitation! For goodness' sake don't call it that. Poem, poetry, what you will, but not recitation. (*Imitating* TOM's *pronunciation.*)

TOM. Well, then, I've just finished the poem. How do I go on?

JACK. Say it may be unpolished, but it comes straight from your heart.

Tom. Oh, yes, I remember. (*To the bolster.*) I fear that it is only poor doggerel——

Jack (*furiously jumping up*). Nothing of the sort. I never write doggerel.

Tom. Of course not; but, you see, I want her to think that I wrote it myself.

Jack (*sitting again*). Oh! very well, then. Go on.

Tom. Miss Brown, since I have known you, I have gained an ambition——I say, Jack, I wish the beastly thing could speak. It's more encouraging, I always think, if the girl answers you occasionally.

Jack: Good Heavens, man! The idea of hitching your trousers up like that! It would ruin everything.

Jack. Well, suppose I take its place. How will that do?

Tom. That'll be much better.

Jack (*moving bolster and sitting down in its place*). Now, you must remember that I am Miss Brown.

Tom. I have gained an ambition in life since meeting you, Miss Brown.

Jack (*imitating girl's voice*). What is that, Mr. Tomson?

Tom. Don't call me "Mr. Tomson," it sounds so cold. Call me "Tommy." Maggie, my ambition, my goal. I have long loved you. Your lips, I say, give me your lips.

Jack. No, no; you're much too soon. You must not ask for my lips yet. Not till you know that I will be yours. Besides, you did not go on your knees.

Tom. Oh! neither did I! (*Carefully pulls his trousers up at the knees.*)

Jack. Good Heavens, man! The idea of hitching your trousers up like that! It would ruin everything.

Tom. But it's only to prevent them getting "baggy" at the knees.

Jack. When you propose to a girl, you must risk getting your trousers baggy. Now, then. (Tom *kneels down awkwardly on both knees and clasps his hands.*) That won't do at all. You're not supposed to be saying your prayers. You will find it better to go on one knee like this. (Jack *sinks gently on to one knee,* Tom *gets up and watches him.*) It's a very simple movement, but it requires to be done with considerable ease and grace. Have another try. (Tom *falls on to one knee.*) That's much better. A little stiff, perhaps; but, then, that's only to be expected. Hold your head up, and try to bend your arm a little more gracefully. By the way, Tom, if you find that practising does not greatly improve your position, I should advise you to propose in the dark; then your awkwardness will not be noticed.

Tom. That's rather a good idea.

JACK (*sitting down again*). Now we'll proceed.

TOM. All right. (*Makes a tremendous grab at Jack's hand.*)

JACK. You needn't pull my hand like that. Be gentle.

TOM. Sorry. (*Takes Jack's hand gingerly.*) Maggie, our hearts are in time; let me ever gaze into your liquid eyes. I love you. Say that you'll marry me.

JACK. You mustn't say "marry."

TOM. Why not? It's what I mean.

JACK. It doesn't matter what you mean. It's what sounds most poetic and artistic. "Marry" is such a common word. Every coster, every bank clerk even, says "marry." Say "be mine," or something after that style.

TOM. Be mine, Maggie, Maggie, be mine. My soul's desire, be mine.

JACK. There's no need to repeat every word two or three times. You're not supposed to be singing an anthem.

TOM. Will you be mine, my love?

JACK. That's much better. (*Imitating girl.*) I will. (*In ordinary voice.*) Now you can ask for my lips.

TOM. Right. Your lips, my love, give me your lips. Let me suck the honey sweet from those——

JACK (*jumping up fiercely*). Oooh! You've no soul for poetry. "Suck the honey!" I didn't say anything of the sort. I said "sip the nectar." "Sip," not "suck." "Nectar," not "honey." Ugh!

TOM. My mistake. Let me sip the nectar of those red lips. (*Jumps up and takes Jack in his arms.*)

JACK (*struggling*). Get away!

TOM (*very pleased with himself*). Don't you think I shall manage it all right, old man?

JACK. You may be able to if you practise regularly for six or seven weeks.

TOM (*horrified*). Six or seven weeks! Oh, rot! I can't wait anything like that time.

JACK. Why not?

TOM. Because I'm dying to marry Maggie.

JACK. Maggie! Is her name "Maggie"?

TOM. You called that thing (*pointing to bolster*) "Maggie." Why shouldn't I?

JACK. I called it "Maggie" because that's what I had practised calling it. But I believe you said "Maggie" just now without thinking.

TOM. Well, what if I did?

JACK. What's her surname?

TOM. Why do you want to know?

JACK. Tell me, man, it's most important. Is her name Maggie Trueman?

TOM. It is. But how on earth did you know?

JACK. Never you mind. But it's no good your thinking of Miss Trueman at all.

TOM. Why not?

JACK. Because she's going to marry me.

TOM. You! Since when has she been engaged to you?

JACK. I refuse to answer your impertinent questions.

TOM. I believe you're telling me a lot of crams. I don't believe she's engaged to you at all. And if she were I should make it my duty to tell her what kind of a man you are. (*Shaking* JACK.) Tell me: Have you proposed to her?

JACK (*cowed*). N—not yet. But I am going to on the first suitable occasion.

TOM. And although you've not yet proposed to her, you dare to say that Miss Trueman is engaged to you!

JACK. I know she'll be certain to accept me.

TOM. Bah! You're nothing but conceit! Listen to me. You're not going to propose to Miss Trueman at all.

JACK. Oh, yes, I am. Who's to prevent me?

TOM. I'll see to that all right. Do you think that I will calmly allow you to propose to Miss Trueman for the sole object of trying the effect of your latest method on her?

JACK. That will not be my sole object. I shall marry her.

TOM. You'll do nothing of the sort.

JACK. Why not?

TOM. Because I shall marry her myself.

JACK. Pah! You daren't even ask her.

TOM. Oh, yes, I dare. And what's more (*going*) I'll go and do so at once.

JACK (*fetching him back*). You'll do nothing of the sort. She's mine, I say.

TOM. She's mine.

JACK. Mine.

TOM. No, mine.

JACK (*almost speechless with rage*). There's no need for you to lose your temper when I tell you she's mine.

TOM. She's not yours. I'll fight you for her.

JACK. You'll do nothing of the sort. What right have you to fight for her?

TOM. The right of Love. I can see very well that you're afraid.

JACK. What! Afraid of you?

TOM (*threatening him*). Yes, you coxcomb!

JACK (*getting out of Tom's way*). Enough, vile slanderer! I'll agree to——

TOM. Fight?

Jack: Not if I know it.

Jack. No; to arbitrate. It's very good of me, you understand, seeing that she's my property.

Tom. I absolutely deny that. Still, as you say, we'll arbitrate. Whom shall we get?

Jack (*going towards door R.*). I'll go and see if Dick has come home yet.

Tom (*pulling him back and flinging him into chair*). You'll do nothing of the sort. I know your little game.

Jack. You know more than I do, then.

Tom. You'll go up and give him your version of the case first and so influence him in your favour. No, my boy, I know your little dodges. I'll go and fetch him. (*Going.*)

Jack (*pulling him back and flinging him into chair*). You'll do nothing of the sort. I see very well what you're playing at.

Tom. You see more than I do, then.

Jack. You'll just get outside that door and then race off to the Truemans, and propose to Maggie before I can.

(*The door R. opens and* Dick Dickson *enters. He is a very ordinary-looking young man, dressed in a comfortable lounge suit. The others do not hear him, and he stands watching them at the back, looking very perplexed.*)

Tom. Since you refuse to trust me, then——

Jack. You mean, you refuse to trust me. I vote that——

Tom. We both go.

(*They both turn round at the same moment and see* Dick. *They rush at him and, each taking him by an arm, pull him forward and thrust him into chair C.*)

Dick (*panting*). What in the name of all that's holy is the matter with you two fellows? What have I done to be treated like this?

Jack. You've not done anything.

Dick. Well, then, kindly——

Tom. But you've got to do something.

Dick. And what is that, may I ask?

Tom. Settle a little dispute for us.

Dick. What about?

Jack. A woman, of course. (Dick *whistles.*)

TOM. You see, it's like this——

JACK. No, you don't. Who is trying to give him a one-sided version now? Dick, it's like this. Tom claims——

TOM. Don't listen to him, Dick; he's telling a lot of crams.

(JACK *and* TOM *talk at the same time.*)

DICK. If I might venture to say something, I should suggest that it would be advisable to give me a full account of the whole case.

TOM. That's precisely what I was going to do when Jack interrupted me.

JACK. You mean it's what I was doing when you so rudely stopped me.

DICK. Why not one of you tell me?

JACK and TOM. I will. (*Both start talking together again.*)

DICK. Jack, why not let Tom tell me?

JACK. It wouldn't be fair to hear his version first.

DICK. Well, then, Tom, why not let Jack tell me?

TOM. Because he would try to influence you in his favour.

DICK. Then the only way I can see is for me to ask you questions. Will you both agree to that?

TOM. All right. } (*Together.*)
JACK. Very well. }

DICK. That's right, then. I will question you in turns, so as to have everything quite fair for both. First of all, Jack, what is your claim with regard to this woman?

JACK. I say she belongs to me.

DICK. And yours, Tom?

JACK. I say she's mine.

DICK. Have you asked her to marry you, Jack?

JACK. N—not yet.

DICK. Have you, Tom?

TOM. No, but I'm going to-morrow.

JACK. Not if I know it. (*They quarrel over* DICK'S *head.*)

DICK (*jumping up and pushing them into chairs, R. and L.*). Shut up! You must only answer the questions I put to you. By the way, who is the lady that is causing all this strife?

JACK. Why do you want to know?

TOM. Her name is "Maggie." "Miss Margaret Trueman," to give it in full.

DICK (*shouting*). What! Maggie Trueman?

TOM. What's the matter? } (*Together.*)
JACK. What's up? }

DICK. You are a couple of silly idiots!

JACK. Why?

TOM. What do you mean?

DICK. What I say. Maggie—as you're so good as to call Miss Trueman—is going to marry me.

JACK. You!

TOM. Good Heavens!

DICK. So I don't think that either of you will propose to her to-morrow or any other day. Now I should advise you two fellows to shake hands and try to forget that you're not only a couple of fools, but also a couple of babies.

TOM (*holding out his hand to* JACK). Jack, Dick's quite right, we are a couple of fools, but we needn't be babies any longer. (JACK *shakes* TOM'S *hand rather reluctantly.*)

DICK. That's right, and I trust that you won't bear me any malice for having won the bone of contention myself.

JACK. To think of your having won her, Dick!

TOM. When did the happy event take place?

DICK. Only this evening. I was just coming in to tell you, Jack, when you both pounced on me like a couple of hooligans.

JACK. Would you mind telling us—in the strictest confidence, of course—how you—er——?

TOM. Popped the question.

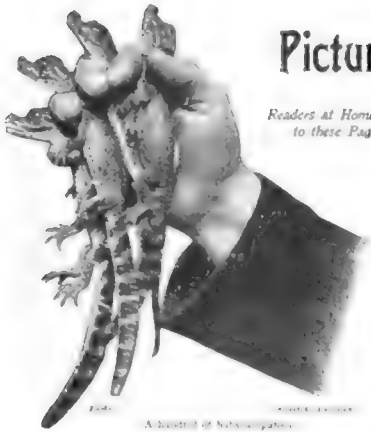
DICK (*sitting*). Well, I don't mind telling you two. There's not much to tell. (*Pulls out pipe, which he proceeds to light; the others get very impatient.*) I was walking with Maggie, this evening, down the High Street. As we passed that large furnishing shop, I saw a notice in the window: "Make haste. Get married at once, and let us furnish your house on the hire system." Suddenly it struck me: "Why not take their advice?" So I called Maggie's attention to the notice, and said: "Shall we follow their advice!" That's all.

(CURTAIN.)

This little play is especially suitable for performance by amateurs. Anyone wishing to present it in public should apply for permission to do so to the Editor, ROYAL MAGAZINE, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Picture Paragraphs.

Readers at Home and Abroad are Requested to Contribute to these Pages. Used Contributions are Paid for.



A handful of baby alligators

ALL ABOUT ALLIGATORS.

THIS handful of rather unhappy-looking baby alligators was brought from Florida, where the alligators come from, by a naturalist, who found them when recently hatched, and promptly annexed them.

The warm climate of Florida is very well suited to alligators, as they are cold-blooded, and a certain amount of heat is necessary for their well-being.

The mother alligator lays her eggs in the mud of a river bank, and covers them over with layers of grass and dry leaves.

They are hatched by the warmth of the sun, and the mother looks after her young until their scales have grown.

Alligators seldom breed in captivity.

They sometimes live to a great age, and cases have been known where individual saurians have existed for nearly a century.

Young specimens should be fed nearly every day, on fresh meat and worms.

CHINESE GRAVES.

THE Chinese treat the graves of their ancestors with great respect, and are very particular in choosing the site of their own, dry ground being the first consideration.

Well-to-do Chinese, as a rule, seek out and fix the position of their own graves while they are still alive, believing that a good grave brings prosperity to the following generations. No greater insult could be offered to a Celestial than to say, "Dig your ancestor's grave."

After being buried for three or four years the bones are dug up and put into a jar, which is placed inside the tomb, usually dug horizontally into a hillside and closed by two small doors of wood or stone.

At intervals, instead of placing flowers upon the grave as in England, in tribute to the dead, the Chinese set above the two small doors a good square meal of "chow," which is supposed to please the devil and cause him to abstain from torments.

Every year, about the end of February, the Chinese celebrate what is called the "Ching Ming" festival, when all, rich and poor alike, worship their ancestors' graves, even the poor travelling hundreds of miles to do so.

A Chinese grave, built on a hillside in order to insure its being dry.

A SAFETY SMOKE HELMET.

FIRE-FIGHTING appliances have been so perfected of late years that the work of subduing conflagrations, although still attended by considerable danger, is far easier than in the days of the manual and fire-bucket.

We still read of gallant firemen losing their lives while engaged in the work of rescue, but Science has extended a very powerful helping hand to the men of the hose and hatchet, so that they can now accomplish much more with a great deal less risk than was possible in the past.

Still, even in the twentieth century, no one can exist without air, and a smoke-laden atmosphere is one of the worst difficulties with which fire-brigades are called upon to cope.

A patent smoke-proof helmet for life-saving at fires.

An invention has recently been patented which enables burning buildings, or the smoke-filled holds of burning ships, to be entered with impunity so far as breathing is concerned. It consists of an air-tight helmet, something like a diving helmet, supplied with compressed air from cylinders carried on the shoulders. These contain 100lb. of compressed air, which enables the wearer of the apparatus to breathe in comfort for a considerable time—long enough for all purposes for which the smoke-helmet is required.

FOUR RECORD MEN.

It might be said of records, as of women, dogs, and walnut trees, that "the more you beat 'em, the better they be." They seem to exist, like pie-crust and promises, to be broken. Yet they are daily being made, and worshipped like the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar the king set up.

Even the stolid, patient inhabitants of Berlin have so far become frivolous as to cause four records to be made in their city some time back.

To accomplish this end, they decreed a congress. Its object was to discover the smallest, tallest, thinnest, and stoutest men.

When a German starts out to make a discovery, it has to be made somehow; so large sums of money were offered to persuade the shy tall, thin, short, and stout men not to continue blushing unseen.

The result of the congress was as follows:—

The tallest: Joseph Olschewsky, thirty-nine years old, height about 6 feet 7 inches. The smallest: Bruno Schmidt, twenty-eight years old, height about 3 feet 2 inches. The stoutest: Hans Feldhosen, twenty-nine years old, waist about 5 feet 5 inches. The thinnest: Richard Minelli, forty-two years old, chest about 1 foot 11½ inches.

Winners of prizes for the smallest, tallest, thinnest, and stoutest men at a Berlin Congress

Photo International Press Agency.

The start of a race: waiting for the signal.

WHIPPET RACING.

The Poor Man's Sport.

Whippet Racing is a sport more popular in the North of England than in the South. This is a matter for regret, since, if properly conducted, it is a fascinating and enjoyable pastime, deserving to be more widely known and appreciated than is at present the case.

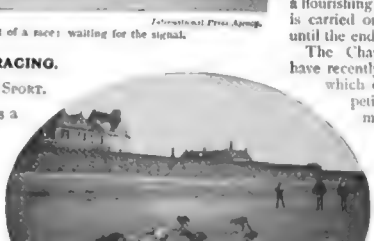


Photo International Press Agency.

The race in full swing: nearing the winning-post.

The dogs are held on the marks allotted by the handicapper, and when all is ready the owners or trainers of the dogs run up the course.

As they run they wave white towels, or pieces of white calico, and attract the dogs' attention by whistling and calling to them.

These men are obliged to pass a mark some ten yards behind the winning-post.

The dogs are started by the discharge of a pistol, and when released run as fast as they can to their owners.

Each dog is distinguished by wearing a coloured ribbon round its neck, and the judge usually stands in a hole in the ground, so that his eyes may be on a level with the dogs as they pass him.

Whippet racing has been somewhat barred by influential sportsmen on account of alleged sharp practices connected with it. The sport has probably, however, been greatly slandered. In the Channel Islands a good example has been set by conducting races without the excitement of the ring. The solitary bookmaker permitted has to be content with a half-crown stake.

Jersey and Guernsey each boast a flourishing club, and dog racing is carried on from early spring until the end of November.

The Channel Islands clubs have recently introduced a rule which enacts that all competing dogs must be muzzled.

It is a great pity that sports of this nature, inexpensive, yet affording plenty of amusement, are not more widely encouraged among the people of this country. Those unable to afford expensive pastimes would benefit greatly from such amusements as whippet racing.

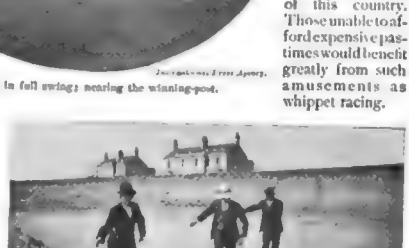
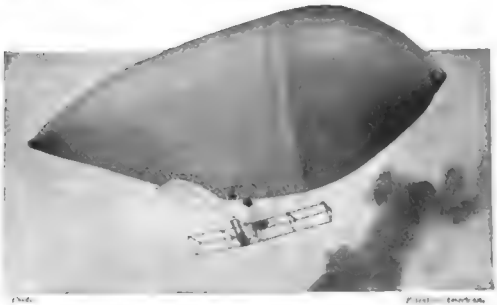


Photo International Press Agency.

The finish of a race: each man calling his dog.



A little rowing exercise up in the skies.

THE LATEST THING IN AIRSHIPS.

An Aerial Skiff.

The very latest departure in airships is an aerial skiff, which owes its invention to Alva L. Reynolds, of Los Angeles, Cal., U.S.

The airship consists of a gas-bag, whose centre of gravity is much nearer the front of the bag than is usually the case, and a light framework, which supports the occupant of the vessel.

The whole contrivance is raised, and lowered, and pulled backwards and forwards by means of a pair of wing-like oars.

The gas-bag can, by employing weights, be made to raise just half-a-pound less than the weight of the aeronaut.

Gravity is then overcome by the use of the oars, anyone who can scull being able to handle the aerial skiff with ease.

At present several hundreds of people have tried their 'prentice hands at rowing the airship up and down the park where it is being tested, although no experienced aeronaut has yet experimented with it.

The bag is thirty-seven feet long, and fifteen feet in diameter at the centre of gravity.

To raise the car and a passenger weighing 150lb., 2500 cubic feet of gas are sufficient.

An interesting fact about this new sky-craft is that the entire cost of building a car and bag large and strong enough to carry one person is little more than £20.

From four to six miles an hour can be covered by a good oarsman, but there is always the drawback, as in the case of the ordinary rowing-boat, that it is difficult to row against a current.

In the case of an airship the current is, of course, an unfavourable breeze.

It seems certain that, having regard to the numerous attempts made nowadays to solve its problem, aerial navigation will before long become not only practicable, but popular.

The well-known drawings in comic papers of families departing in airships for their holidays may some day find realisation, and it does not seem as if that day is now far distant. The introduction of airships would be very welcome.

The big, wing-like oars with which the airship is propelled.

FLYING FIFTY FEET ON A BICYCLE.

This daring achievement of Dr. C. B. Clark, a well-known American cyclist, has come as a surprise to the world.

It was in the quietude of his study that he evolved his twentieth century sensation. He studied the theories of impetus and gravitation most carefully, and made numerous experiments long before he himself carried his ideas into actual performance. Even then, his first attempt to jump fifty feet through space on a bicycle was no mean test of a man's courage.

Dr. Clark decided to make personal experiments with his theories, and at Coney Island he made his first public appearance, quite recently.

Two semi-circular platforms were raised with an intervening space of fifty feet, both platforms being strongly supported by stout beams of wood. When the signal to start was given, Dr. Clark swooped down the first descent with lightning speed.

The spectators held their breath as they watched the daring cyclist, with rapidly revolving pedals, flying on his mad career. As he approached the verge of the first platform he was travelling at a terrific pace, and many of the onlookers turned their heads away.

Those who watched saw a truly marvellous sight. What appeared to be a pigmy man and bicycle rose twenty feet into the air, and the spectators wondered whether the force of gravity or the original impetus would win. That fifty feet of space between the platform seemed to yawn for its prey.

With a sudden lunge forward, bicycle and man alighted upon the opposite platform.

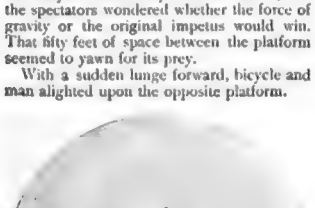


Photo Illustrated Press.
Dr. Clark flying through the air on a bicycle

Photo Underwood.
Steeplejack Hammond, of New York, at work.

A SMART STEEPLEJACK.

Steeplejack Hammond is probably one of the best known New York characters, and one of the most intrepid steeplejacks in the world. He is here seen at work on a church at New York, at an altitude almost equal to that of the dome of St. Paul's.

Curiously enough the calling of the steeplejack appears to be hereditary, and runs in families.

It is not very long since Steeplejack Hammond was employed in England on some of the restoration work at St. Paul's Cathedral.

The Fiji islanders sail in boats rigged like this.

A FIJI SAILING VESSEL.

Although not exactly cup-challengers, the weird boats built by the Fiji islanders answer the purposes for which they are made admirably, and, wafted along by the breezes filling their peculiarly-shaped sails, cover quite a respectable number of knots per hour.

These vessels have sometimes, however, been put to very sinister uses. It was once the lot of an American journalist some thirty years ago to behold what, perhaps, was one of the strangest sights ever witnessed by a white man—a Fiji naval battle.

"I was absolutely appalled," he says, "by the uncanny spectacle. The rival fleets literally charged down on one another, and I waited breathless for the shock of their meeting. The big, queer-shaped sails of the vessels made them resemble the fabled monsters of the classics, and they seemed to be really and truly alive.

"As I watched, the fleets met and the combat began. It was of the Homeric description, and the dull thud of the war clubs on the heads of the enemy was a thing to be remembered.

"But this was nothing to the reverberating crash at the meeting of the two navies.

"The bows of the leading vessels crumpled up like matchwood, and the confusion was indescribable.

"During my wanderings in many lands I have never seen anything like that battle."

A COW WITH COLOSSAL HORNS.

When we were young we were most of us supplied with information, more or less accurate, about a cow which had a crumpled horn.

The horns of the cow below are not crumpled, but they are exceptionally large and fine.

It lives on a farm eight miles from Johannesburg, and is an excellent type of the South African cross-bred beast.

But its peculiarity lies in the fact that although the South African trek ox has enormous horns, and it would be remarkable almost to find a specimen deficient in this respect, yet the cows as a rule have comparatively small "antlers."

As will be seen from the illustration, the cow photographed with the one already mentioned has quite ordinary horns.

The dimensions of the remarkable horns were as follow:

They measured six feet six inches from tip to tip, each horn being well over three feet in length. At the root they were as large as a man's leg.

Oxen are almost as useful in South Africa as horses are to us here in England.

It will be remembered that, during the late war in the Transvaal, the 4·7 inch naval guns were drawn by large teams of oxen, and earned for this reason the nickname of "cow-guns" among the troops.

A South African cow with large horns. It is unusual for cows to grow horns of this size.

Discharging a Debt

How a Curate Won His Bride.

By T. W. Doubble.

"Why did you ask Mr. Hilliard to come and stay with us, mamma? He is so slow, and I know Jack and he won't get on together."

"My dear, I am certain the poor man wants a holiday, he works so hard. Surely you won't grudge him a fortnight's stay with us? And, as to Jack, there is no doubt that if he does not like him he will leave him severely alone."

"Perhaps I am a trifle too hard on him. He is, of course, really very good. But you must confess, mamma, he does bore one a little sometimes."

Mrs. Crawshaw was seated in a comfortable wicker chair on the stage of her houseboat, with an open letter upon her knee; whilst her daughter Eva sat opposite her, abstractedly working a piece of fancy embroidery.

The houseboat was an elaborate structure, decorated in cream and pale blue; whilst clusters of brightly-hued flowers hung in wanton profusion from boxes on the window-sills and around the top and deck of the gay craft. An awning protected the occupants of the stage from the July sun, and supported fantastic lamps, which swayed lazily to and fro in the breeze.

Mrs. Crawshaw lived most of the year at her house in Kensington; but, during the hot weather, she removed with her daughter to less formal quarters on the Thames. She was of an hospitable disposition, and often invited visitors to spend a few days on the houseboat who would otherwise have had to bear the burden and heat of town.

Thus, from a purely philanthropic motive, she had invited the Reverend St. John Hilliard, the poorly paid curate of their church in Kensington, to spend a fortnight on the river with them, which he had gladly consented to do.

Jack Crichton was an old friend of the Crawshaws, and came and went just as he felt disposed. He was blessed with those two attributes most admired by the opposite sex—good looks and an athletic figure. He was a good horseman, a tolerable shot, and, indeed, was a fair performer in most out-door pastimes.

On the other hand, the Reverend St. John Hilliard had attractions neither of face nor of figure, nor any athletic accomplishments—with the exception of swimming, which he had acquired only under compulsion at school—to recommend him. But, as Mrs. Crawshaw always said when any discussion of him was on, his heart was in the right place, and he was a thoroughly worthy fellow.

The mother and daughter sat in silence for a time, and then Eva said: "When do you expect Mr. Hilliard, mamma?"

"He is coming on Wednesday, dear, in time for dinner," replied Mrs. Crawshaw, as she poured out the tea which had just been set before her by the maid.

"And Jack?"

Copyright, 1906, C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., in the United States of America.

"Oh! he will come some time on Wednesday also; but you know what he is. Any hour in the twenty-four is as likely as another for him to come."

On the following Wednesday, Mrs. Crawshaw was again seated on her houseboat, awaiting the arrival of the curate. Her daughter stood by the open French window of the drawing-room in a flowered muslin frock which became her wonderfully. She had a pretty face, and had acquired that valuable knowledge of knowing how to dress.

Her toilet had received particular attention this afternoon, for, like most of her sex, she liked to be seen at her best when anyone was present who particularly admired her; for she knew, with that intuition common to all classes of society, that the curate felt something more than a casual liking for her.

Mrs. Crawshaw had just ordered tea to be served, when the maid appeared and announced, "Mr. Hilliard."

"How do you do, Mr. Hilliard? I am so glad you have been able to come," said Mrs. Crawshaw cheerily.

"Thank you," returned the curate; "it has given me great pleasure to accept your kind invitation. How do you do, Miss Crawshaw? I—I am glad to see you looking so well."

The Reverend St John Hilliard had sunk into a chair with a cup of tea in his tremulous hand, and was just casting about in his mind for a theme of conversation, looking oddly out of place in his sombre black clothes amongst the gay surroundings of the houseboat, when a step upon the gangway proclaimed the advent of another visitor.

"Hullo, Mrs. C.! Hullo, Eva! How are you? Fit as a fiddle as usual, I suppose? What! is that you, Hilliard? What are you doing down here? You haven't deserted the fold for the river, surely?" and with these informal remarks Jack Crichton made his appearance.

Mrs. Crawshaw and Eva gave him a cordial welcome, whilst the curate smiled feebly.

"We hardly expected you at such a respectable hour, Jack. I am beginning to think your manners are improving," said Eva smiling.

"Well! perhaps they are," returned Jack doubtfully, as he dropped his cricket-bag and subsided into a deck-chair; "but I think it is more owing to good fortune than good manners that I am here so early. You see, we managed to win fairly easily, so the match was over before the usual time, which allowed me to get here before dinner."

"Did you have a good game?" ventured the curate.

"So, so," condescended Crichton; "I made thirty-two and then was bowled by the best ball of the match. It was a beastly swerver that looked as though it would break from the off, instead of which it came in from leg and took my middle stump. I made the mistake of playing forward instead of playing back."

"Full-back?" suggested the curate affably.

Jack Crichton, with a look of compassion on his face, explained that he had been playing cricket, not football, and then rose to prepare for dinner.

That evening, when dinner was over, Mrs. Crawshaw took the Reverend St. John Hilliard out on to the stage, that he might enjoy the freshness of the night air; whilst Eva sang and played in the drawing-room, and Jack Crichton lounged beside her in an easy-chair, smoking a cigarette.

It was a new experience to the overworked London parson to sit out in the cool summer air, watching the vari-coloured lights from the houseboats reflected in long, shimmering streaks upon the water, and to listen to the lapping of the river against the timber beneath him.

The sweet notes of Miss Crawshaw's voice rose and fell as they were borne to him on the light breeze. He sat and listened in peaceful rapture, his happiness almost complete—almost—not quite. If he had dared to think those tender words she was singing were for him—if he could ever hope to bridge that great gulf that separated them—then his happiness would be complete indeed. But these were higher fancies than the pale London curate ever dared to cherish.

Eva played and sang for some time, and then turned and said:

"What do you propose that we do to-morrow, Jack?"

"Oh! I don't know; what do you say to a day on the river?"

"I should think that would be a good suggestion—and take our lunch with us," returned Eva.

"I suppose it won't be necessary to take that ass?" said Crichton, jerking his thumb over his shoulder in the direction of the stage.

"Thank you," returned Eva, drawing herself up; "we are not in the habit of entertaining asses here!"

"Oh! I am sorry," said Crichton, with feigned solemnity, "I didn't know you harboured any tender feelings in that direction."

"Don't talk nonsense, Jack; when I have any tender feelings and wish to confide in

you I shall do so; but, until then, such remarks are out of place. Let us go and join the others."

Jack Crichton followed her out sheepishly. Miss Crawshaw was not of a prudish disposition, but anything in the shape of insolence she very much disliked, and could return such remarks with a scathing hauteur calculated to make the most brazen persons feel very far from comfortable.

"Would you care to come on the river to-morrow and try your hand at punting, Mr. Hilliard?" asked Eva, as she emerged from the drawing-room.

"Thank you, Miss Crawshaw; I should be delighted if you would teach me. But I am afraid you will not find me a very apt pupil," added the curate dubiously.

The next morning the punt was brought alongside the houseboat and packed with a good supply of provisions. Eva had dressed herself in the most diaphanous of frocks, whilst the curate had substituted a black straw hat and grey flannels for his clerical wideawake and frock coat.

"Here, Jack!" said Eva, handing him the pole, "you shall take duty first, so that Mr. Hilliard may have an example of punting from a master of the art."

The curate lay back upon the cushions to watch the operation. Miss Crawshaw sat down beside him and engaged him in conversation. The pretty scenery and warm sun had the influence of disclosing a new side of his nature to his fair companion. In the usual way he was not of a very talkative disposition; but the convivial surroundings, added to the proximity of an interested listener, led him into quite long dissertations upon the flowers, and trees, and objects they passed upon the river-side, and in the interest of the conversation he quite forgot his self-consciousness.

After they had travelled smoothly on for some time, Miss Crawshaw relieved Jack Crichton of the pole; a change which was not welcomed by the curate, as Crichton—to say the least of it—was not effusive to him. But he was quite content to watch silently the elegant figure in the stern dropping the pole noiselessly into the water and gracefully bending as she propelled the punt forward.

The curate . . . looked upon it as a gracious concession . . . to be allowed to wash the plates and dishes for Miss Crawshaw to wipe.

The place selected for lunch was beneath some willows which overhung the river. The curate thought he had never enjoyed a meal so much in his life, and looked upon it as a

gracious concession upon the part of Crichton to be allowed to wash the plates and dishes for Miss Crawshaw to wipe afterwards, whilst Crichton lay upon the bank and smoked a cigarette.

But his happiness was to have a somewhat sudden ending. "You wanted to pick some flowers, did you not, Eva," said Crichton, when all the crockery had been disposed of.

"Yes, Jack; just take my hand and help me out, and we will go and get some," returned Eva.

"But what about the punt? It will be hardly safe to leave it unattended," remarked Crichton, as the curate was about to follow them, then added: "I say, Hilliard! would you mind just stopping here for a few minutes and keeping an eye on the punt? We shan't be gone long."

The curate's face was one of disappointment as he returned, "with—pleasure," and got disconsolately back into the punt.

For an hour he impatiently waited and they did not return. Then he got up and stepped ashore and went to look for them, wandering as far as he could whilst still keeping the punt in view.

He had sauntered but a few steps, when two figures on the bank attracted his attention. He moved hurriedly forward a pace or two, and—yes—there she was, seated by his rival, with a few flowers in her hand, talking and laughing, blissfully forgetful of the punt, of himself, of anything save her own present happiness.

He turned on his heel and walked abstractedly up and down. Why had he ever allowed her to find a place in his thoughts? Hers was a different sphere of life from his—hers was a brighter, gayer nature than could ever think of him—a poor, unaccomplished curate—in any other light than as a casual friend. He who had never been jealous before in his life, knew what the word meant now. The worm had entered and embittered the fruit of his happiness; and Jack Crichton was the man he was jealous of. Could he ever hope for any other feeling but of kindness from her, he would be prepared to wait cheerfully for years; but so happy a consummation he knew it would be hopeless to anticipate. No, he must put her out of his thoughts; but how could he, when he would see her every day? He would leave on some pretext. He would return to town to-morrow and, in the surroundings of his daily work, forget he had ever loved her.

He was still pacing the bank when the two returned full of profuse apologies for having been away so long. The flowers were few and far between, they said. But the curate returned no answer.

"Would you like to try your hand at punting now, Hilliard?" queried Crichton, when they were ready to return. "You will find it easier, as we shall be going down with the stream."

Hilliard was glad of the opportunity of having something to take his mind off his thoughts, and accepted the proposal readily. He removed his coat and prepared to become acquainted with the mysteries of punting. Eva Crawshaw and Jack Crichton sat in the bows and coached and laughed, and staved off many an impending impact with the bank. But the Reverend St. John Hilliard struggled manfully on. Beads of perspiration stood upon his forehead and water dripped from every point of his anatomy. He could bear the jests of Miss Crawshaw; but the handsome, smiling face—tanned almost to the mahogany shade of the punt—goaded him to the point of desperation. He would have been in the river once, in a desperate struggle to disengage the entangled pole, had not Crichton come to his assistance. A heavily-laden steamer was rapidly approaching him, but though his tired arms felt like lead, he would not give in. The craft came steadily nearer, appearing a veritable liner to his distorted vision. He tried to keep into the bank, but the horrible steamer had a fascination for the frail punt.

"Keep her close in," said Crichton from the bows.

"She—won't—keep—in," jerked the curate breathlessly.

"Good Heavens, man, be——"

But the advice came too late. The pole had slipped from the curate's grasp in a last desperate effort to keep near the side, and the misdirected punt swung round helplessly under the bows of the steamer.

There was a scream and cracking of timber, and the Reverend St. John Hilliard found himself struggling in the water. His first instinct was to strike out for the bank; but then he bethought himself of the other occupants of the punt. He glanced round and saw Crichton making for the shore, but no one else was visible. Oh, horror! Supposing Miss Crawshaw were drowned, and through his carelessness! The thought was too terrible. As he turned in the direction of where the accident had occurred he saw something rise to the surface. With a couple of strokes he was beside it and caught Miss Crawshaw in his arms as she was about to

sink again. Exhausted with his previous exertions, the curate felt what little strength he had left deserting him as he towed the inanimate form through the water, and as he neared the bank he doubted if he would last until he reached it. His head began to swim, but he clutched his precious burden with the pertinacity of death. His saturated clothes dragged him back with magnetic force, and his arms moved mechanically. Could that be the bottom which had grazed his leg? No, he had still to swim—but, yes—he touched it again; the river must have got suddenly shallow.

He could stand! He could walk! She was safe—and the curate fell face downwards in the water.

* * *

"Then you think he will pull through, doctor?"

"Oh, yes! Miss Crawshaw; we shall get him round now, thanks to your unwearied nursing and attention."

These were the first sounds that the Reverend St. John Hilliard had heard for the last five days. He opened his eyes and looked round, but the place was strange to him; then he tried to sit up, but a firm hand held him gently down. He knew he was not in the little bedroom of his sombre lodgings, and he tried to recall where he was and what had happened. Then he remembered the punt and the accident, and how he had saved Miss Crawshaw's life, and then his resolve to return to town came into his mind.

He tried to get out of bed, but the same hand restrained him again.

"How long have I been here?" he asked in a weak voice.

"Five days," returned the doctor.

"And how is—Miss Crawshaw—is she all right?"

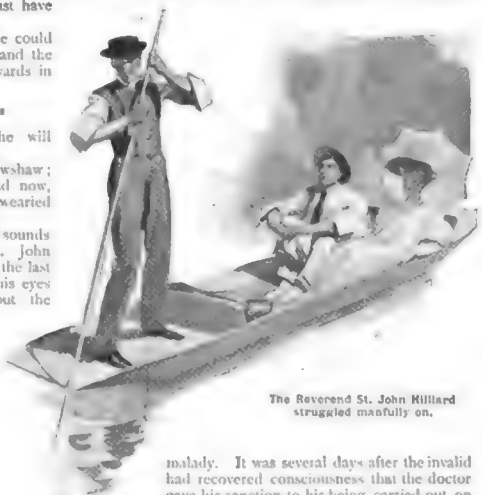
"I am here to answer for myself, and to thank you for saving my life, a debt I can never repay," came the reply from beside him.

"Never repay?" muttered the curate.

"But what small percentage I can return by nursing you back to health," continued Miss Crawshaw, "I give willingly."

"And the investment that will pay the patient the highest rate of interest at the present moment is sleep," added the doctor jocularly; "so if you will just draw down his blind, Miss Crawshaw, we will leave him."

Acute exhaustion, owing to over-exertion, accentuated by being in a low state of health, was the doctor's diagnosis of the patient's malady. It was several days after the invalid had recovered consciousness that the doctor gave his sanction to his being carried out on to a settee in the open air, and fully another week before he allowed him to walk.



The Reverend St. John Hilliard struggled manfully on.

Jack Crichton had gone off the day after the accident upon some pretext of family business, feeling exceedingly uncomfortable with regard to the previous day's proceedings.

Now the day had come when the curate was in sufficiently good health to return to town, and announced his intention of doing so on the following day to his hostess. Her persuasions to him to remain a little longer with them until he should be quite strong again and fit for his strenuous duties, he politely thanked her for, but refused.

After dinner that evening he strolled out

on to the stage to smoke a cigarette in the cool evening air. It was a beautiful night; the stars shone brightly overhead, and the river flowed silently past, out of shadow into the light and then on into darkness again—like his life, he thought—unheeded and alone. As he leant over the rail, following up the train of thought, he became conscious of the rustle of a skirt, and, looking round, saw Miss Crawshaw beside him.

"So you have made up your mind to leave us to-morrow, Mr. Hilliard?" she began.

"Yes. I am leaving by the ten minutes past eight train in the morning," he returned.

"But why so early? Would not a train a little later suit you as well?"

"There is work to be done which I feel it my duty to do with as little delay as possible," he said firmly.

"Then, if it is a matter of duty, Mr. Hilliard, don't let me dissuade you. You will be off before I see you to-morrow, so I will wish you good-bye now."

He took her proffered hand, and she turned to leave him.

"Miss Crawshaw," he said, "before you go, I should like to thank you for all the kindness and attention you showed me during my illness——"

"Oh, that was the least I could do," she exclaimed before he had time to conclude, "in view of what you did for me, and when, I am ashamed to say, the accident was largely owing to our own want of consideration for you. I only wish I knew of some other way in which I could discharge my indebtedness to you."

"If any debt there be unrepaid," he said slowly, "the means of discharging it are not within your power."

"Then you insinuate that had I the power I could render you some kindness. Oh, tell me, tell me, Mr. Hilliard! how I can discharge my debt," she pleaded.

"Miss Crawshaw," he returned passionately, "could you have loved me as I love you; nay, could you but give me hope of one day winning your affections; could you then, after I had trained myself to be more like what you consider a man ought to be, return me a heart in exchange for the priceless life I saved, I should consider the debt a thousand times repaid—but otherwise, no way remains."

He leant upon the rail and looked down at her. She had never appeared so beautiful to him before.

She raised her eyes to his, and moved slowly nearer.

"Is that all you ask?" she said, smiling sweetly, with the soft light of the lamp above shining upon her face. "Then I discount the bill and discharge the debt willingly."

The ten minutes past eight train sped rapidly to town next morning, but the Reverend St. John Hilliard was not numbered amongst its passengers.

A DELICATE SITUATION.

We stiffly sat in corner seats.
I gazed at her; she stared at me.
Our faces, grimly set, appeared
As doleful as they well could be.

The sun shone brightly, and 'twas hot
Within that small compartment's space,
But still I wore my overcoat;
She wound a boa round her face.

The train was full. Our attitude
Did not escape the idle throng.
They thought we'd quarrelled, or were mad,
Or strangers, p'raps but they were wrong!

For we were on our honeymoon,
And thus to move we did not dare
For fear of shaking into sight
Confetti which we knew was there!

LESLIE THOMAS.

Real Life Romances.

Readers are Asked to Contribute to this Feature. Payment is Made for all Accepted Contributions.

The Thwarted Plot.

A TALE OF A PRINCE AND A RAILWAY.

MOST people are aware of the terrible dangers that surround rulers of States other than our own. Even the advance of civilisation has in no way diminished these dangers, as the following incident in the life of the present Crown Prince of Greece will show.

A new railway had recently been completed, extending from Piræus to Chalkis, and on the Crown Prince fell the duty of declaring the railway open to the public.

Outside the station a vast assemblage had collected to honour their Prince. A dazzling sun glared from a cloudless sky, and a gentle breeze stirred the countless flags with which the station was decorated.

At one of the platforms a newly-finished engine, gay with bunting, was waiting to draw the Prince and his suite in a gorgeously decorated corridor car.

A loud outburst of cheering filled the station as the Prince stepped into the carriage; and louder still it swelled as the engine, emitting clouds of white steam, pulled the train slowly from the station.

Soon Piræus lay several miles behind. The track led through the country, across fields of vines and tobacco plants. Now the royal engine was gathering speed. Cottage, field, and woodland flew past rapidly. A white stone marked that they had journeyed three kilometres. And then another that the fourth had been reached.

The twentieth kilometre stone had just been passed. Beyond it a man stood beside the track. His eyes were bright with excitement, and in his fingers was firmly clenched a round object.

As the Royal train approached, the man stepped back a yard from the track. Then, with a quick motion, he raised his arm, and hurled the object with all his force into the car.

A loud smashing of glass paled the faces of all within. Visions of a bomb arose in every mind. But no explosion followed.

The Crown Prince picked up the missile. A glance showed him that this was no bomb—merely a common flint.

But something was attached to it—a piece of paper.

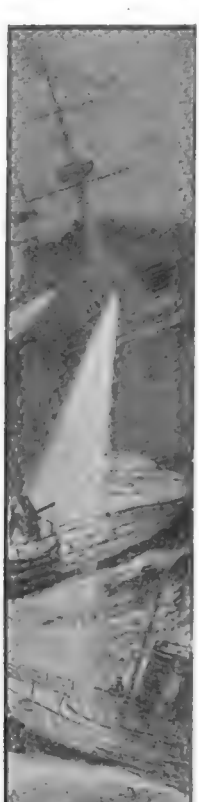
He glanced at it—and read:

"There is danger at the fiftieth kilometre stone."

At once the Royal train was stopped. Officials were dispatched to the spot indicated in the strange message. The warning proved to be true. A little beyond the stone the track over which the train would have passed was found to have been blown up by dynamite, and a terrible accident would inevitably have resulted but for the warning brought by the stone.

The Prince caused inquiries to be made in order to find out to whom he owed his life. The man proved to be a humble track examiner. Needless to add, he was suitably rewarded for his meritorious vigilance and promptitude.

He raised his arm, and hurled the object . . . into the car.



Half-a-dozen low-lying destroyers darted towards the unwary cruiser.

The Captain's Signal.

A TALE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN FLEET.

WAR had been declared. The Mediterranean Fleet, under Lord Charles Beresford, trim and cleared for action, lay heaving in the blue seas off Greece. Eastward, like a huge emerald rising from the sea, lay the island of Cephalonia.

There, on shore, it was peace. The fisherman idly dropped in his line, and puffed his cigarette, unconscious that amongst those iron monsters flying the British flag, war had been declared.

But only war in counterfeit!

Slowly the sun set, until far behind Cephalonia it showed as a great orange ball upon the hill-tops. Then bit by bit it vanished.

Night fell. With it the sailors on board the great war vessels sprang into wakefulness. War had been declared. Far out at sea the enemy was approaching. They must meet the attack. The first blow struck must be from them. And signals flashed from ship to ship as the Admiral issued his instructions.

Then the great fleet headed seaward. Foremost in the line of battle steamed the cruisers. Not a light showed from any ship.

Every man was at his post. Every gun lay trained and ready to hurl mock destruction upon the first suspicious craft that crossed their lines.

On the foremost cruiser the captain anxiously awaited the moment when the fight should begin. It was trying work, this mimic warfare. But it broke the monotony of ocean life, and every man, from the stokers down amongst the seething boilers to the officers, welcomed the change.

A sudden alarm was raised. A ship was approaching. Through the moonless darkness its black outlines loomed.

Was it the enemy?

No, impossible, the officers agreed. The enemy would not dare to venture near with lights burning at the mast.

Now the ship had approached within a quarter of a mile of the cruiser.

"It is the *Surprise*," one suggested, recalling the little pleasure steamer that had left Cephalonia some hours previously with a party, mostly ladies, on board.

And she the little steamer proved to be.

A thought crossed the captain's mind. He turned to the signalman. And from the cruiser these words flashed out:

"Is—my—little—girl—on—board?"

Instantly a great roar filled the air. From behind the peaceful little steamer half-a-dozen low-lying destroyers darted towards the unwary cruiser.

The attack had come.

The enemy had surprised them.

Gallantly the cruiser replied, but all round her the little craft hung, hurling in mimicry a score of deadly torpedoes at the iron leviathan.

Thus the enemy scored the first success. Under the cloak of the little pleasure steamer they had approached, and, discovering the cruiser most unexpectedly by reason of the captain's message, had promptly put her out of action.

The Fatal Door.

AN EGYPTIAN ROMANCE.

KARNAK, in Upper Egypt, is the scene of this grim and extraordinary romance.

Picture a long, low, flat-roofed dwelling, and the owner thereof digging, as if for dear life, in the plot of ground belonging to it.

Thus has he toiled for many weary days, scarcely giving himself time to eat or sleep, and this morning, at last, his labour is likely to be crowned with success.

He has a strong conviction that treasure is buried on his property; gold, perhaps jewels, or even a red and black earthen jar containing the ashes of some great and long-forgotten Egyptian, for which the stupid Englishman will offer untold sums.

He came, yesterday, upon a doorway in the rock; to-day, it is cleared of rubbish. It stands free. He has but to pass its rotting portal, and his discovery will be made.

He steps back to admire for a brief space his handiwork, to rest awhile from his exertions, and to revel in the joy of anticipation. Then he passes through the doorway.

Evening draws nigh, but the husband does not return. His non-appearance, so far, has caused no apprehension. Of late he has been too busy to come in for food.

His wife, therefore, gets ready the evening meal, a more substantial one than usual.

The toiler will be hungry, for he can have eaten but a few figs since breaking his fast at an early hour. Then she goes to the door to listen for the sound of his pickaxe.

All is still.

She steps forth to fetch him, but she comes not again.

Meanwhile the son and daughter of this couple are awaiting with patience the coming of their parents. They have returned, the one from his trade, and the other from her marketing, to find the house deserted, and the food untouched.

The boy, having stabled his mules, rejoins his sister.

"Where are my father and mother?" he inquires.

"How should I know more than thou?" replies she, "seeing that I, too, have only now returned."

"Has my father found the treasure, do you think?" asks the brother, with brightening eyes.

His sister starts up.

"Perhaps my mother will be with him. Let us seek them."

Together they hurry into the garden, but do not come back.

A neighbour comes to the door of the silent dwelling-house. He notices the untasted food, and draws his own conclusions. Surely the treasure has come to light at last!

His footsteps follow those of the other three. Like them, they are not retraced.

The prolonged absence of this man from his home causes a not unnatural alarm.

His family send out search parties. The authorities of the place are communicated with, the treasure-seeker's house and garden are thoroughly examined.

Proper precautions being taken, it is proved that each of the five unfortunate persons had been overcome by the poisonous gases coming from the secret chamber, for centuries concealed behind that fatal door.

The owner . . . digging, as if for dear life, in the plot of ground.

Suddenly a cry burst from the girl: "My ring has gone!"

The Ruby Ring.

A ROMANCE OF COINCIDENCE.

THIS true story is told by Mr. Albert Lee, the well-known Congregational minister.

A pretty, winding river, golden with water-lilies, its banks decked with rustling grasses, and a boat, containing four people, idly drifting down stream, combine both the scene and the characters of this narrative.

In the boat, perhaps one should be more particularly singled out. This was a girl, sitting at the stern, piloting the small craft. She gave little heed to the ropes lying at her side. Her thoughts were mainly on the water-lilies, that from time to time she gathered into the boat, and the flowering grasses skirting the banks.

A ring of quaint design sparkled on her finger. It was an heirloom, a precious relic that for centuries had been handed down from one generation to the next. One ruby, large, and of surpassing richness, ornamented its massive setting.

Suddenly a cry burst from the girl:

"My ring has gone!

"Let us go back," she pleaded in distress. "It must have fallen off as I was getting the white lily."

The boat was swung round. In a short time its four occupants were gazing intently into the shallow water, near the spot where the lily had been plucked. A few feet below they could plainly see the yellow, stony bed of the river, and the fish winding through a scanty forest of lily stems.

But nothing of the ring could be seen.

Now comes the sequel.

A year passed, and, strangely enough, the girl happened to be on the river with precisely the same companions.

Near the place where the ring had been lost one, recalling the misfortune, suggested, with more jest than sincerity, that they should search for it again. And for the second time the same four heads peered eagerly into the clear, limpid water.

Thus ten minutes passed, but the ring remained unfound. Then another suggested that the floods had probably swept it far down the river, and all agreed that to search further was useless.

Here that unruly sprite called Chance, closely akin to Coincidence, stepped in, and caused the girl to pluck a handful of scorpion grass from the bank.

She dropped the grass in her lap.

An amazed cry burst from her.

There, in the midst of it, lay the ruby ring.

* * * * * *

What had been the adventures of the missing ring from the time of its loss to that of its strange discovery no one can tell. Whether it had slipped from the girl's hand as she plucked the grass from the bank, or had really fallen into the river and been cast up by a flood is a matter of surmise. But without doubt the coincidence is one of the most extraordinary that can possibly be conceived within the bounds of truth. Certainly, the girl considered herself very lucky to have found her treasure after being without it for so long. And the incident is all the more remarkable when it is remembered that any passer-by might easily have discovered the ring in the same way as did the rightful owner.

Attacked by a Baboon.

A SOUTH AFRICAN ROMANCE.

THE following account of an encounter with a baboon is told by a young Africander Dutchman, whose farm is in the Zwaart Ruggens.

"I was riding slowly," said he, "along the side of the mountain leading to the Montagu Pass, when I saw in front of me a troop of baboons sitting on the roadside and upon the road itself.

"I raised my hand in a threatening manner and shouted, but with no effect. There they sat, glaring at me and showing their white teeth. They evidently intended to dispute with me the right of way.

"I had often come across baboons in the mountain and along the road, but this defiance was something new. However, I wasn't afraid of the brutes, so, getting off my pony, I gathered some stones to throw at them to make them move.

"I was still stooping to pick up stones, when a huge baboon sprang upon me from behind, and brought me to the ground.

"One of my arms was free, and I struck the baboon with all my might between the eyes. The blow told, for with a yell of rage he sprang up, taking me with him, and we both rolled over the low parapet at the side of the road.

"Immediately beyond this parapet was a sharp declivity of about fifty feet, then a series of terrace-like rocks, and below these a sheer drop of three hundred feet to the river.

"As we cleared the stone wall, I realised the awful danger I was in; so did the baboon, for he instantly released me.

"Flinging out my arms, I sought to lay hold of something to stop my wild descent. Luckily for me, I struck against the only large tree growing at that spot. Frantically I grasped it; but a thrill of horror went through me as I felt the tree bend over, and heard the tearing of the roots.

"Breathlessly I climbed up, fearful lest the roots should give way, and I should be hurled into the depths below.

"At length I reached the ledge, pulled myself over, and I was safe. But what a narrow escape it was. All the roots had been severed save one.

"Then I wondered what had become of the baboon. I looked over the edge of the precipice, and there, not thirty feet below, I saw the vicious animal standing on a narrow ledge of rock.

"When he saw me, the savage look in his eyes increased in ferocity. He began to climb up to where the topmost branches of the tree would be within his reach.

"A new terror faced me. I was no match for that fierce brute. My only weapon was a strong clasp knife.

"A sudden inspiration came to me. I leant over to the slender root that had saved my life, and began to cut it through.

"Just then the baboon sprang out and grasped the tree; his weight did what my knife could not have done in time. With a snap like that of a pistol shot, the last strand broke—tree and baboon went hurtling into the ravine below."

His weight did what my knife could not have done in time.

Saved By Compressed Air.

A BOILER EPISODE.

SOME years ago I was employed at a large brush works in the north of England as a boiler attendant.

At the time, I was in love with a bright young nurse at the local hospital, and, quite unconsciously, I had displaced someone else in her affections. My rival worked in another department. He was generally credited with being a "wee bit simple," and was the butt of his mates.

We were engaged in repairing two of the boilers. I left one night with instructions to come at five o'clock next morning and clean out one of them.

On the morrow I and an apprentice commenced work, and, letting the water out, we undid the manhole cover, and, with the aid of a lantern, entered and were soon at work chipping, scratching, and scraping away the scale inside the boiler.

We had just knocked off for breakfast when I noticed the automatic low water gear was defective.

Telling the apprentice to go home and have his meal, I again entered with my tools, and was soon alone in the shed.

I had just finished and was about to leave, when, to my surprise, the small beam of light which shone through the opening through which I had entered was obscured, and I heard the clanking of a spanner on the nut outside.

And then the horror of the thing broke in all its force upon me.

Here was I alone in this hot, stifling atmosphere. In ten minutes' time men would have started filling and firing up the boiler.

I should be boiled to death!

Presently I knew from the now faint noise outside that work had again begun, and I started shouting, and banging about with the spanners, but no assistance came.

After a moment or two I felt that the tube against which I was leaning was beginning to get warm.

It became unbearably hot, until the water, which was rising steadily, covered it and cooled it as it rose.

I felt a pressure on my ears and chest, and I knew that the air was slowly and surely getting more and more compressed around my head.

Eventually a happy thought saved me.

The air was compressed into a quarter its usual space. If I could but lift the safety valve from inside, at the same time shouting, someone would be sure to hear me.

With all my force I pushed the valve off its seat and yelled loudly. The valve was lifted right out of its seat and someone looked down.

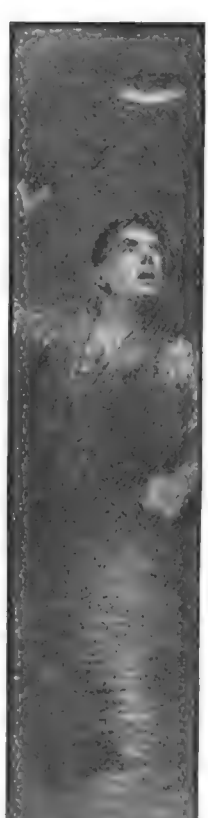
Shortly afterwards I felt the water recede until the tube on which I stood was uncovered, and then I fainted for the first time in my life.

* * *

On recovering in the hospital the first face I saw was that of Alice, my *fiancée*.

My skin was like a boiled lobster in colour for many days.

I am thankful to say my rival, who I have strong suspicions shut me in, did not succeed with my adored one, for I am now happily married to Alice.



I started shouting, and banging about with the spanners, but no assistance came

My Lady's Veil

How It is Made,
Its Advantages and Drawbacks,
and how It should be Worn.

The unique illustrations on pages 357 and 358 were obtained as follows. The photographer made negatives of both veil and sitter, and the picture was obtained by superimposing one negative upon the other.

By J. Glenfield.

Someone has said that we esteem most those things which are only half revealed. In that may lie the secret of the enormous popularity of the veil, which is now being worn in every conceivable style, and made in all manner of fanciful materials.

At one time the veil was looked upon as the special property of the lady of uncertain age, but that idea has passed away, and girls still in their teens now regard it as an indispensable part of their outfit.

The reason for this change in the public taste is that the leaders of fashion have begun to see what artists have long observed—that the soft lines of a gracefully-draped veil give a charm to the headgear, and form a dainty setting for a pretty face, such as can be attained in no other way.

The veil, then, is not only fashionable but becoming, an assertion that cannot be made concerning every article that gains popularity in the world of dress. Many years ago the veil was esteemed at its true worth, and it is inexplicable that it was ever allowed to pass out of vogue. Now, however, that it has once more gained a footing, we may be certain that its intrinsic worth will give it a longer life than the generality of fashions. It may even have come to stay. Let us hope that this is so.

Although the veil is an attractive adjunct to the toilet of every woman, there are some to whom it is more becoming than others. For instance, a thick veil will not improve the appearance of a lady with small features, for it will rob her face of character and make her look commonplace and insignificant. On the other hand, a woman with a prominent chin and nose will be much improved by the veil, for it will subdue the pronounced

A veil of black Brussels tulle, with small spots of chenille, and a chenille border. This veil is popular among ladies of middle age whose complexions are neither very dark nor very fair.

character of her particular type of beauty, and will make her look more dainty and youthful.

The question of colour is all important in the selection of a veil. The lady with a dark skin will do well to avoid brown veils, even in their most seductive shades, for they will make her complexion look dull and muddy. As a general rule she will find that any shade of blue is most becoming to her, for it will give her skin an appearance of delicate softness and clearness.

It has been said that a fair girl can wear any colour; but there are limitations. As regards blue, for example, she will look her best in a very light shade, and also in a tone of the deepest violet. But in the matter of veils let her avoid all intermediate shades, for they will make her face look grey and uninteresting.

Apart altogether from its attractive appearance, the veil has many claims to favour. In bad weather it protects the skin and saves it from roughness and discoloration. Moreover, it will save its wearer from much

Copyright, 1908, by C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., in the United States of America.

uneasiness on a cold day, for she will know that it effectually hides the flush which she is all too conscious has not located itself upon the most suitable part of her features.

The business girl finds a veil of inestimable value, for it saves her complexion from the smuts of the railway carriage, besides keeping her hair neat, and permitting her to dispense with a second toilet, which would otherwise be necessary when she reaches her office.

In a fog, a veil of fine texture is a valuable asset to its wearer, both from the point of comfort and health. It catches the particles of soot which are floating in the atmosphere, and which would otherwise find their way into her eyes and cause her intense annoyance; and it insures that the air she breathes is at least tolerably free from impurities that mean a sore throat to the woman who does not wear a veil.

Let it here be said that for foggy weather the prudent woman will select a veil of the cheapest variety, for to the finer kinds of net a fog means absolute ruination.

So much for the advantages of the veil.

The drawbacks are less obvious, but it must be admitted that they exist. A great oculist has said that every spot on a veil means a guinea into the pocket of some member or other of his profession. This view, though perhaps slightly exaggerated, has undoubtedly a foundation in fact. The injury to the eyes is caused by the spots interrupting the line of vision, and permanently damaging the delicate focussing arrangement which is located in the eyeball.

The remedy for this danger is not very hard to find. Let the choice rest on those veils which have clusters of spots here and there, and not on those that are sprinkled with spots all over their surface. Care should also be taken in putting on the veil to see that none of the spots are directly in front of the eye.

If these precautions are taken, there will be little need for alarm, and a drawback to a dainty fashion will be effectually removed. In the case of veils without spots there is absolutely no danger, for the fine network acts in precisely the same manner as a pair of smoked spectacles, protecting weak eyes from a superabundance of light and from the evil effects that might otherwise result from direct contact with the wind.

Women who motor frequently suffer from eye-strain. The fact that they invariably wear veils when out for a spin has been held by some to account for this, and, acting on the supposition, a number of fair devotees of the car have even gone so far as to discard veils altogether, in spite of the protection which they afford from the wind.

In this instance it is safe to say that the veil is blamed undeservedly. The eye-strain of the motorist is caused by the rapidity with which the field of vision is constantly changing, and resembles the strain which we have all experienced when looking from the window of a railway carriage for a few minutes at a time.

The fair motorist, therefore, may rest assured that the veil which she finds so useful does not in any way injure her. For motoring special veils have been devised. They are generally rather thick, and of very close texture, for they are, of course, intended to break the force of the wind as well as to keep the hair from blowing about and becoming untidy. It cannot be said that motoring-veils share the beauty that is

common to all other kinds, since they are intended for use rather than for show, and are generally wound round the face and head in a manner which absolutely precludes any chance of artistic effect. There is no remedy for this, as a straggling end of chiffon, however graceful it may be, must be avoided by the motoring girl.

The manufacture of veils is interesting in the extreme.

The more elaborate kinds of veils are exceedingly expensive to make, and are designed by highly-paid artists. As a rule, the network is made either in Nottingham or in Lyons, and is sent to Paris to be ornamented. This is done with little spots of a material called chenille.

Chenille is a French word meaning caterpillar, and the cord which bears that name is a remarkably accurate imitation of the insect. It is made by weaving warp threads together with a transverse weft in such a manner that the loose ends are left projecting all round like a sort of pile. The cords of chenille are made in different thicknesses, so that their

A veil of white Russian net with conducted spots. The dark and fair girls can wear this design with charming effect.

A delightful veil of double colour net, with a deep tie spots. Dark girl will find this type of veil very enlightening.

diameter varies from a sixteenth of an inch upwards. The material used may be either silk or wool.

These strips are cut into tiny pieces, which are fixed by hand upon the veil so as to form any design that may be desired. Why the Parisians should excel in this particular art cannot be explained, but they seem to have a special deftness for this type of work that defies the competition of their rivals.

In the cheaper kind of veils the chenilling is done by machinery, but the name chenille can here be given in courtesy only, for the spots are generally formed by dabs of black paint, which have an irritating trick of coming off upon the face of the wearer, especially if the veil becomes moist.

Another type of veil that is exceedingly fashionable is made entirely of lace. Alençon and Chantilly are favourites, but it must not be supposed that they are made in France, as their names would imply. As a matter of fact, these laces are manufactured in Belgium on the same looms that produce the so-called Limerick lace.

One of this season's fashionable veils of spotted net, with a border of pleated satin ribbon. This model is worn all the year on hats and bonnets of superior.

There can be no certainty as to the origin of the veil, but in all probability we borrowed the idea from the East. Among the women of the Orient the veil is regarded as the most important part of the wardrobe, and it generally costs as much as all the rest of the costume combined.

The reason for this is twofold. In the first place the ladies of the East have a fund of innate good taste, which teaches them that the veil is more becoming and graceful than any headdress that could possibly be devised. Then, again, the Mahommedan religion demands that all its female votaries shall be kept in seclusion. This rule is always obeyed in the letter, but not invariably in the spirit in which it was intended, for the Turkish ladies of fashion have adopted the very smallest and flimsiest of face coverings, which is draped across the features but in nowise conceals them. These veils are generally made of a kind of cobweb net, spun from the finest silk, and they are far less opaque than the tulle veils which are affected by the ladies of our own country.

There is a very pretty fashion amongst the Parsee women of Bombay. They wear a veil of delicate texture no fewer than five yards in length.

They drape one end of it about their heads, leaving the rest to be twined about their figures and to hang down over their skirts, forming the most diaphanous of draperies.

If the veil advances in popularity as it has done during the past few months, we may even follow the example of the Parsee women, though none of us would be sufficiently daring to adopt the fashion except in a very modified degree.

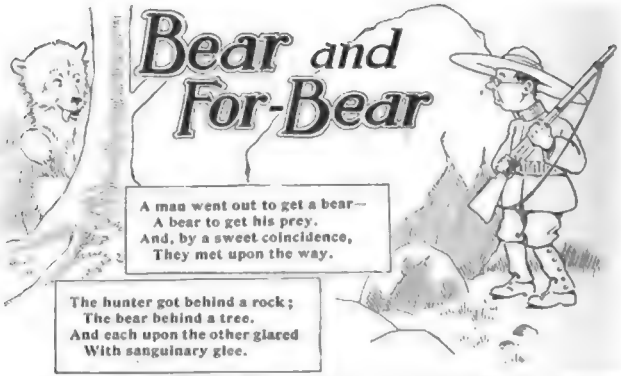
We may say, without undue self-praise, that the women of Britain display great discrimination in regard to fashions, and a sense of moderation which prevents them from running to extremes.

Thus, they will not encourage any style bordering on the eccentric, no matter how graceful it may be.

For the use of the hats and veils which illustrate this article we are indebted to the courtesy of Mr. Gainsborough, of Hanover Square.

A very "chic" veil of fancy tulle, with dots in spots, and a border of soft black satin ribbon. This veil can only be worn by very smart women with fair complexions.

Bear and For-Bear



A man went out to get a bear—
A bear to get his prey.
And, by a sweet coincidence,
They met upon the way.

The hunter got behind a rock;
The bear behind a tree.
And each upon the other glared
With sanguinary glee.

The bear was sleek—and of his skin
The man took special note.
"There goes the very thing," said he,
"My new fur overcoat."

Some such bright thought had struck
As he surveyed the man— the bear
"Umph! There's my dinner—grumph,"
growled he,
"I'll have it while I can!"

The man he aimed a rifle ball
At Bruin's heart or head;
But merely peeled a strip of bark
From off the tree instead.

Out rushed the bear upon his foe
And ate him bone and skin,
And licked the little pieces up
Till all was gathered in

So each got what he'd gone to get,
On his respective spree:
The man, his bearskin overcoat;
The bear, his dinner free!

F. D. HORNER.

W. F. SMOND

By Allen Upward.

This is the Third of a New Series of Exciting Ghost Stories. They are entirely Different in Conception from Anything of the Kind that has ever been Published before. Each Story is Complete in Itself.

III.—THE SECRET OF HORNER'S COURT.

I had by this time acquired quite a reputation in business circles as a buyer and investigator of houses reputed to be haunted.

The transactions I made were usually very profitable, since, as the agents were unable to either let or sell the ghost-ridden property which they desired me to purchase, I was able to secure it on favourable terms.

Miss Sargent, my lady secretary, who possessed the gift of clairvoyance, was of great assistance in probing mysteries connected with haunted mansions.

Not long after the fortunate ending of the adventure at Hailesbury Manor, I was approached by one of the leading firms of house-agents in the West-end with reference to another haunted house.

Horner's Court, as this place was called, had been on the books of the firm for many years, but they had been unable to find either a tenant or a purchaser for it on account of its reputation.

The partner who called on me described it as a well-built eighteenth century house, situated in a northern county, on the outskirts of a famous forest. Two dukes lived in the immediate neighbourhood, so that the house ought to have fetched almost a fancy price from one of that numerous class who appreciate high Society.

But, for some reason or other, no one seemed willing to take to the place.

I listened to all Mr. Roseveare had to say, and asked if he could tell me anything definite about the prejudice or superstition which affected the house.

He shook his head.

"I can tell you nothing. It was placed in our hands by the trustees of the estate—I don't even remember whether they are acting for a minor, or how the property stands."

"Nor who occupied the house last, I suppose."

"A widow, I believe: a woman of rank—Lady Something or Other. She gave it up on her marriage to a second husband. Perhaps it is haunted by the ghost of the first," Mr. Roseveare added jocularly.

I smiled out of politeness, though I had ceased to look upon these subjects as matter for jest.

A business discussion followed, and it ended by my securing an option to buy the property on such nominal terms that if I could rid it of its disagreeable character I stood to make a very substantial sum indeed.

As soon as the understanding was reached, I called in Miss Sargent, and dictated its terms for her to type.

Mr. Roseveare was evidently struck by her name.

"May I venture to ask if this is the young

Copyright 1905, by C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., in the United States of America.

lady who discovered the secret of the Green House?" he said respectfully.

I introduced him formally, not very well pleased with his presumption. Naturally, I did not wish the most valuable assistant in our office to be too friendly with a rival firm.

"What a perfectly charming girl!" was his exclamation, as Miss Sargent quietly withdrew to make her transcript. "I quite envy you, my dear sir."

"We find Miss Sargent competent, and loyal to her employers, and we do not look beyond," I returned, intensely annoyed.

Mr. Roseveare said nothing in reply, but he smiled in a way which I found it hard, as a business man, to bear.

"Well, I will send you round a copy of the agreement as soon as it is ready for signature," I said, as a broad hint for him to go. I was determined not to give him another chance of annoying my secretary.

"I am afraid you will not send it by Miss Sargent," he retorted rather vulgarly and maliciously, as he put on his hat and departed.

As I foresaw would be the case, Miss Sargent lost no time in applying for permission to aid me in investigating the mystery of Horner's Court.

The happy issue of our last adventure of the kind made it difficult for me to raise any objection. I had come to see, moreover, that, however great the strain upon her in her clairvoyant state, her experiences seemed to have no after effects of an injurious kind.

Accordingly, I arranged with her that if, on arriving at the scene of action, I found that there was any suggestion of an occult influence at work, I would summon her at once.

I went down two days later, the agreement with Roseveare & Grimston having been signed meanwhile, not without some further remarks by Mr. Roseveare which it would be childish on my part to record.

I arrived at a wayside station towards dusk on an autumn day, and was driven for miles along a misty road strewn with yellowing leaves, till I saw in front a great iron gate thrown back and rusting on its hinges.

Through this opening the dog-cart drove, and brought me along an avenue of black and naked trees to a gaunt house that stood and frowned at its own reflection in a dreary, reed-grown pool.

I caught my breath at the sight—I could not tell why—and when I had dismounted from the dog-cart I stood on the weather-stained steps in front of the door, and felt a sense of reluctance at the thought of pulling that great, iron bell-handle and passing under that forbidding doorway.

With a shiver I mounted the steps and rang. The door was opened by a man—a man of a lowering, distrustful countenance, which told me at the first glance that it would not be his fault if a tenant were ever found for Horner's Court.

It seemed to me that I should learn more from this man if I concealed the true character in which I came, and let him suppose that I was acting for another.

Handing him my bag, I let him take me through the dark and dreary hall, lit only by a solitary candle, into a vast dining-room, almost equally dark and cheerless.

Some logs had been heaped in the grate, and as we came in a woman was putting a match to the small twigs underneath.

She looked up at me with a nervous glance of dread, and in that look I read that she knew the secret of Horner's Court—and that she would never dare to tell it to me.

Very few words passed between us, and those chiefly about supper. I bade the man show me my bedroom, and he took me up to a room on the floor above—a room whose windows looked directly on the dismal pool.

"Is this the haunted room?" I asked, with an affectation of levity which I was very far from feeling.

The man raised his head and stared at me.

"No, sir, it ain't. That room's the other side of the house, and if you take my advice you won't go near it except by daylight."

For that night, at all events, I was glad to accept his warning.

At dinner, if the rough meal set before me could be so called, I was waited on by the forbidding retainer, whose manner checked all attempts to draw him into conversation.

I could only glean that he had come to Horner's Court as a caretaker on the departure of Lady Maria Cruikshank, as the last tenant was named by him. No doubt the berth was an easy one, and he would resent having to make way for a new occupier. Inwardly I made up my mind to dismiss him as soon as possible.

He was obscure, intentionally obscure, I thought, on the subject of the supernatural visitings.

"I never seen nothing myself, so I can't say," he intimated darkly. "But I seen the faces of them what has seen something, and that was enough for me."

"And your wife, has she seen anything?" I asked.

"Don't you get speaking to Mrs. Stokes about it," he broke out abruptly. "She's half crazy already, and it wouldn't take much more to drive her clean off her head."

I sipped my glass of port in silence. Stokes had brought up an old cobwebbed bottle from the cellar, where a few yet lingered from former times. I filled another glass and gave it to the man.

"Drink that, and tell me what your wife has seen, if you don't want me to question her."

Fixing suspicious eyes on me, he lifted the glass and slowly drained it to the last drop.

"She *says* — well, she says as how she have seen a child."

"A child!"

"Aye. Leastways the sperrit of one, I reckon she means. Happen you don't believe in they sperrits, sir?"

His curious eyes sought to read mine. I shook my head.

"Is there any tradition connected with this house? Any rumour of a crime or tragedy?"

A sullen flush, I thought, rose on his countenance — it might have been the wine.

"Crime? Did you say crime, sir? No, there ain't never been no crime committed in Horner's Court. Lady Maria Freer and her like aren't the sort what commits crimes, are they?"

He spoke with a certain rude insolence which somehow seemed put on deliberately.

"Just now you called her Lady Cruikshank," I said thoughtfully, casting my eyes down, as though I disdained to question him.

His secret fears came uppermost, and got the better of his rudeness.

"She married Colonel Cruikshank when she left here," he said, fawning all at once.

"How long was she here before that?"

"I don't know."

It was a lie, of course, and, like most of the lies told by ignorant cunning, a useless one. Ladies of high rank—and the style of this one showed that she could not be less than an earl's daughter — are easily traced.

A night spent in the haunted house told me

The door was opened by a man . . . of a lowering, distrustful countenance.

nothing more. Surely the shivering miasma of the stagnant pool beneath my window was the evil influence that wrought against the place? When I rose in the early morning and saw the wreaths of dank mist enfolding the walls like a white shroud, I asked myself if any other ghost were needed.

So at breakfast I said aloud, and half-unconsciously:

"I will have the pool drained."

The gloomy man overheard me, and a look of anger came into his eyes. No doubt he feared that his reign was near its end.

"There's nought wrong with the mere," he muttered.

I looked him in the face.

"I shall return here in three days' time. Send your wife to me. I have an order to give her."

He looked at me as if he would have liked to disobey, but dared not, and shuffled out of the room.

When the woman appeared she was trembling, and her eyes were steadily turned to the ground.

I rose to my feet.

"Take me to the haunted room," I said briefly.

I would not trust the husband with my intention. The woman, thus taken unprepared, shuddered, but made no protest. She led the way upstairs to a remote wing overlooking a small garden.

The room was rather sad in its neglect, but not depressing. On the walls I saw some coloured prints, such as are sold at Christmas time with the illustrated papers.

"Who used this room in Lady Maria's time?" I asked, stealing a glance at the distressed creature.

"I don't know."

It was the husband's answer, no doubt repeated by his order.

"The house is haunted by a child's ghost. This looks as if it might have been a nursery," I prompted.

The woman turned very pale, but made no motion.

"Had she a child? And did he die here, in this room? And were there any circumstances—dark and dreadful circumstances?"

I was proceeding earnestly when all at once the woman threw up her hands, and, uttering low moans, tottered out of the room.

I passed her in the corridor, and stopped to whisper in her ear—for I knew not where her husband might lurk:

"I shall return here with a lady who can read the secrets of the dead. Have this room ready for her to pass the night in, and prepare the adjoining room for me."

I thought she would have taken my words as a threat. But she lifted her eyes to mine imploringly, and I just heard her breathe, "Thank Heaven!"

When I went down to Horner's Court with Alwyne Sargent, we did not go alone. An experienced nurse accompanied her, and I brought down, in the disguise of a valet, one of the shrewdest and most determined officers of Scotland Yard.

A "Peerage" had disclosed that Lady Maria Cruikshank was sister to the Earl of Gaysthorpe, and that her present residence was in Florence, Italy. Private inquiries added the information that she was the mother of one son, by her former husband. The boy was now seventeen, and travelling with a tutor.

When we arrived at Horner's Court, the caretaker received us with the same discourteous air. His wife, he told us, was unwell, but a woman had come up from the neighbouring farm to attend to us.

The police officer, by virtue of his supposed position, assumed the right of penetrating into the servants' quarters of the mansion. I followed Miss Sargent and the nurse upstairs, whither the woman led them.

The first glance round the room prepared for their reception showed me that it was not the one which I had formerly explored.

Yet it was like it. Even the very pictures seemed the same. Only, when I passed into the next room, and saw it artfully heaped up with lumber, did I feel sure that the substitution was intentional.

I questioned the woman, who told me truthfully enough, I have no doubt, that she knew nothing of the interior arrangements of the house.

I considered what it was best for me to do, and came to the conclusion that it would not be wise to let the man Stokes know that I had detected his deceit. He might have other tricks in reserve, for it was evidently his object to throw every obstacle in the way of our discovering the mystery of Horner's Court.

I let the woman believe that I was satisfied. But as soon as I found myself alone with the other two, I told them how things stood.

We arranged that when the time came to retire, a bed of some kind should be rigged up for Miss Sargent in the true haunted room. The nurse did not intend to go to sleep, but to keep watch over the clairvoyant.

The detective, whom we had left down-

stairs, was informed of my discovery, and concurred in what had been arranged. His manner showed him to be sceptical of Miss Sargent's powers, but he had come already to the conclusion that Stokes was hiding some secret of a highly doubtful character. He agreed, with some apparent hesitation, to share our watch.

The caretaker seemed to hover uneasily through our part of the mansion as long as he dared. As we sat in the dining-room we heard him locking and bolting the great hall door with infinite precaution.

"That man is certainly afraid of something," the police-officer remarked.

"Whether he really thinks the house is haunted or not, he dreads some accidental discovery."

After this search we all went upstairs. Miss Sargent's couch was made up for her in the room half-choked with lumber. The nurse carried in an armchair for herself, to sit beside the sleeping girl. The detective and I took seats into the corridor, ready in case the man we both suspected should come prowling along in the night.

The detective, Mayhew, declares that he saw nothing, was aware of nothing strange or uncanny happening that night. But he says that he saw me shiver and turn pale without visible cause.

All at once I heard a sound from the other side. Before I could gather what it was, I felt my hair stir and rise, and at the same moment the door was softly opened.

Alwyne Sargent stood on the threshold, her face drawn with wonder and dismay, and her eyes fixed in the unseeing gaze I had learnt to know and dread.

"Take me to the haunted room," I said briefly.

Behind her I discerned the figure of the nurse with finger uplifted.

"Do not wake her, for your life!" she warned me. "The shock might endanger her reason. We must follow where she goes."

By this time Mayhew had risen to his

I sprang forward . . . Just in time to throw my arms round her as she reached the brink.

feet, an expression of amazement on his face.

The somnambulist stepped out into the corridor and moved slowly down it in the direction from which my fear had seemed to come.

The three of us stole after her on tiptoe, scarcely daring to breathe.

She led the way without hesitating downstairs into the hall. There she halted for a moment, as though uncertain which way to turn. But her hesitation was quickly over; she turned away from the main door, and made her way first into a drawing-room, and thence into a conservatory with a glass door at the end leading into the grounds.

There was barely light enough for us to follow her without stumbling against the furniture and the wooden shelves in the glasshouse. But the sleeper moved on surely, without a mistake.

She reached the glass door some way in advance of us, and we heard her turn the handle. Then there was a low, desolate cry, and she shook fiercely at the unyielding door.

Mayhew and I darted forward. The door was locked, and the key had been taken away.

"This is some of that rascal's work," the detective muttered. "May I break the lock?"

By this time whatever scepticism he may have felt had evaporated in the excitement of the quest, and he was as eager as myself to see the end.

"Yes, break it," I said.

He dashed his foot against the flimsy door, and it burst away from its fastenings.

The shock produced no effect on the somnambulist, but she put out her hands and groped as though to ascertain if the obstacle had been removed. Then she heaved a sigh of relief, and passed out on to the lawn.

Turning to the right, she followed a winding path, which led down to the edge of the stagnant pool. I quickened my steps to come up with her, determined at all costs to prevent her falling into the water.

As if conscious of my intention, she hastened on till her walk became a run. I

sprang forward, and was just in time to throw my arms round her as she reached the brink and threw out her hands in a gesture of supplication or despair.

Then, even as I held her rigid form, I did not hear, but I *knew of* a splash far out in the middle of the water, and a deep, silent ripple that slowly passed across the surface of the pool.

Neither of our companions saw or heard anything.

After an instant's agonised struggle, the somnambulist awoke in my arms, crying hysterically. The nurse advanced hastily, and took her from me, soothing her, and turning her steps back towards the house.

As we neared the conservatory door the police-officer uttered an exclamation and darted forward.

He told me afterwards he was certain he had seen the face of Stokes peering out with a look of no common fear. But the man was not to be found.

"I will have the mere dragged the first thing to-morrow," I declared. I remembered now the aversion shown by Stokes at my former proposal to drain the dismal pool.

The rest of the night passed off without incident; but in the morning the woman who had been waiting upon us came and made the surprising announcement that the caretaker was nowhere to be found.

Both he and his wife had fled from the house and from the neighbourhood without a word of explanation; and neither of them has ever been heard of since. It was only possible to suppose that the man had been drawing a secret allowance so long as the mystery of Horner's Court remained undiscovered, and that what he had seen on this night had convinced him that the game was up, and that he would be safer out of the way.

As soon as the necessary appliances could be obtained, the pool was dragged opposite the spot where the somnambulist had stood.

Horrible to relate, the drag brought up the skeleton of a child of about seven years of age.

As soon as the detective Mayhew saw this tragic evidence, he made up his mind that a serious crime had been committed. The subsequent investigation was conducted by him, and I need only tell briefly its result.

Inquiries in the neighbourhood brought out that Lady Maria Freer was the mother of a boy of seven or eight at the time of her engagement to Colonel Cruikshank. The Colonel seemed to dislike the boy; and his mother, who was a heartless Society woman, left him entirely to the care of servants, while she gave herself up to hunting and other amusements in the company of her future husband.

On her second marriage she had quitted Horner's Court for the honeymoon, not to return. The little boy did not appear at the wedding, and it was given out that he had been sent on in the charge of a governess to the place which his parents had chosen as their future residence.

Armed with this information, the detective called on the trustees of the late Mr. Freer, whose heir the boy was.

From them he learnt the important fact that under the provisions of the will the whole income of the estate during the boy's minority was payable to the widow. On the boy's coming of age, or death during infancy, her income was reduced to the widow's third.

Lady Maria was regularly receiving the full income from the trustees, who had not the faintest suspicion of anything being wrong.

Mayhew, who felt pretty sure that the story of the lad of seventeen and the travelling tutor was a myth, obtained a letter from the trustees to Lady Maria Cruikshank, calling for the immediate production of the heir, and went to Florence to deliver it in person.

The wicked mother, thus taken unawares, showed more fear than remorse. She made a confession, which the detective was content to accept as probably near the truth.

The boy had died in the room at Horner's Court; and if his death had not been wholly due to neglect, at least his life might have been prolonged by the care and devotion of a mother who really loved her child. Unwilling to lose the greater part of her income, to which she owed the prospect of a second husband, the heartless woman had concealed the state of her son's health from everyone but the two Stokes, and when the poor child died, she had paid Stokes to dispose of the body in the pool in front of the house. Her plan was to draw the income of the estate up to the last moment, and then send a certificate of her son's death from some foreign place where a doctor could easily be bribed.

The trustees forbore to prosecute, but I am glad to say that they firmly refused to pay another penny to Colonel Cruikshank's wife till the whole of the sum she had fraudulently obtained had been stopped out of her lawful dower; and when last heard of the pair were living in abject poverty.

Horner's Court has become the residence of the High Sheriff of ——shire.

Mr. Francis J. Naylor, who tells the story

XIII.—THE LOST GUNS AND COLOURS.

Being the Story of the Disaster of Maiwand.

From the Narrative of Francis J. Naylor, Limber Gunner, Royal Horse Artillery.

As told to Walter Wood.

Maiwand is a melancholy chapter in our military annals; but it is redeemed from shame because of the valour of the British troops engaged against an overwhelming force. On July 27th, 1880, General Burrows, who had marched from Kandahar, left his camp at Khushk-i-Nakhud to intercept an Afghan army, which proved superior by ten to one. His troops were utterly routed, more than 1200, out of 2300 engaged, being killed. Amongst them were twenty British officers. Two guns of the Royal Horse Artillery and the Colours of the 66th Regiment, now the 2nd Battalion of the Berkshire Regiment, were lost. Lord Roberts subsequently recaptured the guns, and presented them to the Royal Hospital, Dublin. The teller of this story was a limber gunner of E Battery, B Brigade, Royal Horse Artillery. He is now a member of the Corps of Commissionaires.

We had marched out of Kandahar into the heart of the enemy's country, which was Afghanistan, to meet and, if we could—which we did not doubt—beat the Afghan forces. There were not quite 2500 of us, the backbone of our body being a few companies of the 66th Regiment and ourselves of the Royal Horse Artillery:

> The right of the line,
> The pride of the British Army,
> The ladies' delight when dismounted,
> And the angels' pride when mounted.

That, at any rate, is an old, proud boast of ours; but there was not much parade smartness in our appearance when, men in khaki, we pitched our tents in an Afghan graveyard until such time as we could get to close and hot business with the enemy. We had the headquarter companies of the 66th, and their Colours were with them, for Colours were still carried into battle by British troops. Maiwand is famous for two things—the loss of British guns and the loss of British Colours. I believe I am not far from right in saying that, owing to the Colours being lost, orders were given that they should no longer be carried into action, and for nearly a quarter of a century these famous rallying points have been absent from our fights. They are now merely symbols of the regimental spirit.

We left Kandahar on July 4th, our brigade being under the command of Brigadier-General Burrows, and in a week reached the River Helmand. We were in the thick of the excitement at once, because some of the native troops who were with us deserted in a body to the enemy, taking with them four smooth-bore guns which had been presented to them by the Government of India, and which an English artillerist had taught them to use. But we crossed the river, and after giving them some rounds of shrapnel and some case-shot we got the guns back. Case-shot, you know, is fired point-blank, without elevating the gun. It scatters instantly, like a fan, and the hundred and eight bullets in the shot do terrible mischief.

The enemy flung their dead into a little stream in the village, which was red with blood, and hurried off; but before they got away the 66th came up and got in a few volleys. The native women were on the flat roofs of their houses, and they managed to wound two or three of the men of the 66th.

Copyright, 1918, by C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., in the United States of America.

We were in for plenty of excitement even at that early stage. One man of the 66th fired at an Afghan who was up a tree and brought him down like a crow. Instantly another Afghan rushed out from a ditch near, where he had been hiding, and made for the 66th man. But the man was too quick for him, and, although his rifle was empty, he got his bayonet home, and a dismounted native cavalryman, running up, finished the Afghan with his sword. When the guns were ours the 66th got into the shafts, and with drag-ropes drew the guns away until our own horses came up. That was on July 14th, and was a very good beginning to what proved a very bad business.

Another piece of luck attended us on the 23rd, when our two guns and some native cavalry went out, Major Blackwood being in command of my battery. Seeing the enemy at a long distance he ordered a couple of shots to be fired into them. This we did; then, believing that the shots had fallen short, and that precious ammunition was being wasted, the Major shortened the distance. When we limbered up and the cavalry scouts went round, we learnt that the two shots which we had considered wasted had destroyed fifty men and fifty horses.

These happenings were merely preliminaries to the great day of the disaster, which was on July 27th. On the afternoon of the day before, General Burrows had learnt that a large body of the enemy had reached Maiwand, which was not quite a dozen miles away. He also heard that the Afghan chief, Ayub Khan, intended to follow with his main body. The General determined to try to prevent the two bodies from joining together, and so on the morning of the 27th, at about six o'clock, he struck his camp, and the whole brigade of us, baggage and all, marched off. We had no breakfast, and nothing of any sort to eat, and truth to tell, in view of the information which had been received, there must have been some amongst us who had not much appetite.

We marched on for several miles, crawling cautiously, which, hampered as we were, was the only thing to do. Besides, it was a dull, heavy morning, and the enemy might fall upon us almost unseen and unawares at any place and at any moment. Just think what it all meant to us—a long, straggling body, with not far short of 2000 camels, and many ponies, bullocks, donkeys, mules, and horses, and drivers and transport followers. To have had only British troops, untrammeled, would have been bad enough; to be burdened with these swarms of non-combatants and animals was disastrous.

Four hours after starting we were half-way to Maiwand. Then we heard from a spy that that place, which our General had hoped to reach and hold, was already full of Afghans under Ayub Khan. What was to be done? What road can you take when there is only one to use? We were like a gigantic creature which can only travel one way, and that is, ahead. There was one thing to do, and one thing only, and that was to get the business through—to see what would happen when two thousand five hundred of us were in touch with twenty-five thousand of the enemy.

There we were, pinned and crippled, forced to go ahead, if we went at all, and knowing that to advance meant almost certain death. Pretty much as our own position was, I fancy, is the case of the man who has to battle with a storm and drive his ship through it, or bide his time as best he can until wind and sea have done their worst. Just as the gale strikes the ship, so were we struck by the enemy. In the case of the ship something perhaps goes, some point in her stability is affected. So it was with us, for at the crisis when our strength was most urgently needed many of our native troops bolted. I have heard it put in a gentler way than that; but they went, and they left us to it.

There we were, then, trapped in a valley, with thousands of Afghans hovering and flying about us; and only those who have fought against them in their native hills can really understand how swift they are in their movements. And they are so merciless with it! There were the few companies of the 66th, officers and men who were as brave as any that ever wore uniform, their Colours proudly borne amongst them, with the young subalterns carrying them, full of the fire and spirit which always came to men into whose keeping these sacred folds of silk were given.

The 66th were the right sort. We had had plenty of proof of that, we of the Royal Horse Artillery, who had now been in more than one tight corner with them. Then there were ourselves, and, being what we were, we knew what was expected of us.

It was just before noon when that final chapter of the great disaster opened. Strange things happened early and quickly. We got into action, and we could see trees falling in a wood at which we were firing. Almost at the outset, a shoeing-smith was ordered to fasten a shoe on the wheel-horse of the gun.

He was a man who had been remarkable for his strength and freedom from sickness; but he was now ill, and, like most people of the sort, took his ailment very badly. He dismounted, and as he began his work said: "I hope the first shot they fire will blow me to bits." Almost as soon as we got into action a shot came and killed him, as well as two or three natives.

That artillery duel had developed suddenly. We had fired three or four rounds out of each gun, and I remember so well hearing Gunner Moorcroft say hopefully, as men like to speak at such a time of stress: "We'll soon have 'em out of action!" Instantly, as it seemed, the very ground rumbled, and the air was filled with the flashes and thickened with the smoke of thirty-two guns, sweeping upon and into us, and tearing into and through our huddled and disorganised masses.

Picture, if you can, the horrors and consternation of an onslaught like that, in a crowded space, with a cruel enemy in overwhelming numbers surrounding us, and animals wildly stampeding, and transport followers and drivers thrown into panic and confusion. There were Krupp guns as well as smooth-bore guns, and these weapons outnumbered us altogether. In addition to our own Horse Artillery guns, we had the smooth-bores which we had taken, and these were manned by men of the 66th, in charge of a few of the men of E Battery. They were in the rear of our own battery, but did not do much mischief.

We were now fighting not so much for victory, which there was no hope of winning, as for our very existence. At No. 2 gun, which was in charge of Sergeant Mullane, who later in the day won the V.C., I fired no fewer than 105 rounds. That gun and the other guns became almost red hot, and some of the men had their hands burnt in handling them. It was while serving the gun that I lost my hand. I was taking a tube out of my pouch to fire another cartridge, when a six-pound shot ricocheted on the gun-wheel tyre, which is a broad iron band. The shot tore the tyre as if it had been indiarubber, struck me on the left hand, and then broke one of the bones in one of our officers' arms.

Officers and men were now falling fast. It was not so much a fight as a *mêlée*, and the most we could hope to do was to save ourselves and our guns, and the 66th could not hope to do more than hold their own. They were fighting nobly, refusing to give way, and rallying on their Colours. I believe that all would have fallen where they fought, but there was a rush of our own native troops upon them which threw them into confusion and disturbed their steadiness.

Officer after officer, and man after man, went down in defence of the Colours; but they remained flying until the enemy closed in upon us like a horseshoe, and even the most hopeful of us knew that there was only one chance of safety for us, and that that lay in flight.

The gallant Major Blackwood was amongst the killed by this time. He was wounded in the leg, and went to the rear until he tied a handkerchief round it. Having done that, he came back, dismounted, and getting on one side of the 66th, he rallied them.

The Afghans were then rushing up. Major Blackwood tried to remount, but his leg was so stiff that he could not get into the saddle again. He was overwhelmed and slain, his head being struck off with a sword. Gunner Brown, of my battery, tried hard to save him, but he only just escaped with his own life, having seven sword-cuts on his arms and back. He died afterwards in France.

From that point onward all was horror, confusion, and hopelessness. The very life of our guns, the ammunition, was expended; the valiant 66th were absolutely overwhelmed by numbers, and utter rout was being worked amongst us. In a forlorn effort to do something effective, Lieutenant Maclaine rushed off with his guns and got into action. He kept on firing shrapnel as long as he had it to fire; then he used case-shot, and with terrible effect, too. But he was outnumbered, and his two guns were surrounded, one of them especially.

It was a case of every man for himself. There was no time even to spike the guns—they had to be abandoned. One of our men tumbled an Afghan over by thrusting at him with his rammer, and then managed to get away; another cut through the stirrup-leather of one of the gunners, and ran along with his horse and managed to escape. Nearly half our horses were killed, and of those that were living some were shockingly wounded. We could do nothing for them, not even shoot them in mercy; and they, poor brutes, had to take what chance they could get by fleeing. It was wonderful and piteous to see the way they clung to us and followed us—one, in particular, who had his jaw shattered, and galloped on with us in our terrible retreat.

The two guns were lost—we knew that. The enemy had captured them. They had

Lieutenant Maclaine rushed on with his guns and got into action.

also made Lieutenant Maclaine a prisoner—which in the case of the Afghans was worse than death itself. That was part of the price which we of the artillery were paying. As for the 66th, they were in as bad a plight. Desperate though their efforts were to save the Colours—even to the stripping of the poles, so that someone might perhaps get clear of the battlefield with the silk—that failed.

The Afghans captured the Colours. What became of them I do not know, but the poles were used as rammers for our own lost guns—which is, I daresay, an incident that is without parallel in our army. The guns, as you have already been told in the article on the Kabul to Kandahar march, were afterwards recovered.

Well, that disastrous retreat began. It was helter skelter for us all, and a wild confusion. Only the fact that the Afghans, for some reason, did not follow up their success by pursuing us, made it possible for a soul of us to escape. We were all jumbled up together, men, horses, guns, camels, bullocks, and camp-followers and drivers, and we could have been destroyed with ease, helpless as we were through exhaustion of ammunition.

In such a flight a man thinks mostly and almost solely of himself — he has neither thought nor care for anything or anybody else. Of this we had abundant proof in our own battery. I will give you an illustration. Being wounded, I was put in a dooley. A rush of camels tumbled the dooley upside down and threw me out.

The forge of the battery was going by, and the farrier-sergeant shouted: "Get up and have a ride," which I gladly did. At the same moment a private who had been wounded in an earlier fight and had just rushed out of hospital—he had only his shirt on—was coming by on a "tat"; but we took him on to the forge. A native rifleman wanted to get on, too, but there was no room, and so I pushed him off.

He raised his rifle, and the farrier-sergeant drew his revolver, which made the native think better of it. A couple of camels were hurrying past, and the native asked the driver to stop. The driver refused, whereupon the native raised his rifle, shot him dead, tumbled him off, and rode away. I saw no more of him. Maiwand bristled with incidents like that.

There was only one thing for us to do, and that was to get back to Kandahar, which we had so hopefully left, and wait for relief—which came at last through Lord Roberts.

I am not going to speak of the horrors of that long, hard ride throughout the afternoon and night till Kandahar was reached in the morning; but there is one point on which I should like to dwell for a moment. I suppose that in the recollection of all men who have been in battle there remains one outstanding feature, one event which looms above and overshadows all else.

It may be some terrible spectacle of death or suffering, or it may be some grotesque and trivial incident such as you may meet with even on the field of death. In my own case, you might suppose that the wound which cost me my hand would be the chief thing to dwell in my memory; yet that is not so. Whenever I look back upon Maiwand the thing I mostly remember is our terrible and maddening thirst. We had nothing to drink before the fight began, we had not a drop of water during those long hours of pounding, and we had no chance whatever of getting anything to quench our thirst. Parched and swollen-tongued we retreated from the battlefield, and mile after mile in that awful land we and our poor horses strained at the guns to save them.

Thirst!

You may understand what it was when I tell you that some of the natives who were fleeing died as they ran; others, more lucky got at the medicine-chests, smashed them open, seized the bottles, and, frantically breaking them, swallowed the contents. During our headlong flight one or two wounded men who were on the limbers were constantly crying "Water, water!" and that added to our misery and agony. At last we came to a stagnant pool, a horrible, poisonous patch of water, still and silent, thick with grass-green slime on the top. The very sight of such a pool at ordinary times will fill you with loathing; yet, with our overmastering thirst upon us, we got off the gun and rushed at it as if it had been the purest, coolest, clearest stream, and drank and drank again of the foul liquid.

I was wearing a moustache then, as I do now, and I so well remember that when I rose and had drunk my fill, my moustache was thick with the green slime. Strangely enough, none of us felt any ill-effects, nor do I recollect that any of the medicine-drinkers came to grief.

Those of us who were lucky enough to be living, even though we might be maimed—my own hand mortified, and had to be removed—got back to Kandahar about eleven

The gallant 60th Regiment was frequently almost surrounded, and bravely had to cut its way out

o'clock next morning, having travelled something like fifty miles without a stop. The news of our defeat had somehow been flashed on before us; but our own appearance told the sorry truth that we were beaten—and the villagers about the city welcomed us back by firing on us and trying to destroy us. Some of our own artillery and the 7th Fusiliers came out to help us in, and there, in Kandahar, we remained until we were relieved. One of the last to enter was General Burrows, who had had two horses shot under him at Maiwand.

Well, that is the story of the disaster. It was crowned in melancholy fashion, for when Lord Roberts had relieved us, and put Ayub Khan to flight, he rode out to inspect the chief's camp. And one of the first things he learnt was that only a very few yards away was the body of Lieutenant Maclaine, whose throat had just been cut. That was the fate of a prisoner of war in the hands of a bloodthirsty and pitiless enemy.

On such a day there were many deeds of valour—Maiwand gave two men the Victoria Cross, and eight men that next best honour, the Distinguished Conduct Medal—but I think that if I were asked to name the most remarkable act of devotion I should say that it was shown by a private of the 66th. His was a strange and striking case. Some days before the battle a native saw him drinking rum out of a cask, through a straw

"I'll tell," said the native.

"Will you," replied the soldier, "I'll make sure you don't." With that he raised his rifle and shot the native dead. There was some delay in carrying out the death sentence on the man, and he was asked at Maiwand if he would fight.

"Yes, to the very last," he promised.

He fought gallantly from start to finish, and at the end, when the officers and Colour parties had fallen so thickly, he took one of the silk Colours and folded it round his waist, and in that way, fighting still to save the honour of his regiment, he died.

♂ ♂ ♂ ♂ ♂

ON DELIA BATHING.

When Delia cometh to the sea
She wears a costume choice and neat,
With tiny shoes that daintily
Defend her feet.

♡ ♡

She opes the door of her machine
With smiling yet reluctant grace;
She only needs a veil to screen
Her blushing face.

♡ ♡

Upon the lowest step she stays;
And then, half timid and half bold,
A furtive slippered foot essays
If it be cold.

♡ ♡

Her vest of intricate design
With braided girdle is beset,
And round her hair there is a fine
Incircling net.

She takes the plunge with sudden haste,
The water rises to her knee.
She even ventures to her waist
Within the sea.

♡ ♡

She cannot go much further, or
Her vesture would be hidden quite,
The vesture that was fashioned for
Bewitching sight.

♡ ♡

She gives a low and silvery scream,
She trifles with the flashing wave;
With all her caution, she would seem
A little brave.

♡ ♡

But still she makes us understand
That courage has its limits set;
She soon retreats serenely—and
Not very wet.

A. L. S.

MR. GUMMIDGE'S LITTLE DEAL

THE STORY OF A STRADIVARIUS

By A. Dehain Grange.

Peter Gummidge, dealer in old china and antiquities, sat at a small desk in the back part of his shop, balancing his accounts for the day. He was a short, thick-set man, with a hook nose, and a high, bulging forehead that continued in a broad, shining band between lateral tufts of iron-grey hair to the nape of his neck. His eyes were large and prominent, his mouth wide and lippy, and as he bent over his books he emitted sundry low growls and grunts, plainly indicating that his temper was none of the sweetest.

Business had been very slack that day, and, as a consequence, Peter was not in the best of humours. Even the fact that he had sold a pair of "antique" bronze candlesticks and a doubtful "Queen Anne" dinner service at three times their proper value did not console him. To add to his annoyance the thin, wailing sound of a violin came persistently from the street outside.

"Drat the boy!" he cried, rising quickly. "I've told him if he doesn't go away I'll call the police. And I will, too, if there's one to be found."

He hurried to the door, and glared up and down the street. There was not a soul in sight, save the forlorn little figure standing huddled up on the kerbstone. Mr. Gummidge eyed it wrathfully.

"Now, my lad," he said sharply, "you'd better be off, if you don't want to get into trouble. I've warned you once, and—eh! what?"

The tattered bundle of rags had sunk into a heap upon the pavement, the curly black head buried in the hollow of a lean, brown arm. There were sounds, too, distinctly resembling low, broken sobs. Mr. Gummidge coughed, and left the doorway reluctantly.

"Well, what is it?" he asked, standing over the crouching form. "Ain't you well?"

"Oh, yes, sar," answered a weak, plaintive voice in broken English, "I am vell. But my mudder is ill, and my lil' bruder and sister they 'ave 'ad not'ing to eats for two 'ole day, and I—I vant a shillin'——" A fresh paroxysm of grief drowned the feeble utterance.

Mr. Gummidge scratched his head perplexedly. He was what is known as a hard man where business was concerned—none harder; but this—well, a shilling would not materially affect his profits, and it might one day be counted to him for righteousness. Besides, he could easily put it on to the price of something to-morrow.

"Only a shillin', sar. I pay 'im to you back for cert'in." A pair of bright, dark eyes looked up at him hopefully.

"Hum," said Mr. Gummidge, seeing the matter in a new and less heroic light. "You would pay it back, eh?"

"*Che la Madonna*——"

Copyright, 1908, by C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., in the United States of America

"Yes, yes—just so. But how do I know that you are to be trusted?"

"I am 'onest, sar. I 'ave nev-ver broken my *parola*. See! I gif you my violino—my loled violino." His voice shook, and a tear trickled down his grimy cheek. "It is all I 'ave. Keep 'im for—'ow you say?—for bail, sar." He held out the violin with a dramatic gesture.

Mr. Gummidge took the instrument gingerly. It was very old, and it certainly was not clean; but it would sell for three or four shillings at the very least, he thought. The lad watched him eagerly.

"Very well," he said, "it's a deal. Here's your shilling, and you can have your violin when you bring the money back."

The boy clutched at the coin greedily, and with many muttered protestations of gratitude hurried off down the street. Mr. Gummidge returned to his desk feeling pleasantly conscious of having done something for the sacred cause of charity.

The next morning a tall, cadaverous-looking personage in a rusty black suit, who had been attracted by the show in the window, and was prowling round the shop somewhat aimlessly, chanced upon the violin in the course of his peregrinations. He glanced at it carelessly, started, and examined it more closely. Suddenly he uttered a loud exclamation of surprise, which caused Mr. Gummidge to nearly drop the Wedgwood cup he was holding in his hand.

"Why—can it be?—yes, as I live, it is a Stradivarius!" cried the stranger, peering eagerly inside the violin.

"A *what?*" asked Mr. Gummidge, whose knowledge of antiquities did not extend to musical instruments.

"A Stradivarius," replied the stranger, looking at Mr. Gummidge out of the corners of his eyes.

"Never heard tell of it," said the latter bluntly.

"Ah!"

There was something furtive in the stranger's manner that put Mr. Gummidge on the alert. The violin was evidently worth more than he had thought. The question was, How much more?

"You would like to buy it?" he asked guardedly.

The stranger smiled deprecatingly.

"I should have liked to have done so," he said. "But, unfortunately, I am not in a position to afford such luxuries. A genuine Stradivarius is rather beyond me, I fear."

He sighed regretfully.

"Hum!" said Mr. Gummidge.

"Still, if you are prepared to sell, I can easily find a purchaser for you. Several men I know would be only too glad to acquire such a perfect specimen of the great master's art."

"Ah, yes," murmured Mr. Gummidge, "it is a lovely bit of workmanship!"

"Lovely!" cried the stranger. "It is miraculous—divine! Hark at that!" He drew his finger across the strings rapturously. It certainly sounded better than the harsh scraping of the dirty little Italian boy. Mr. Gummidge made a rapid mental calculation.

"How much would you—would your friends be inclined to offer?" he asked.

The stranger waved his hand vaguely. "One—two—three hundred pounds. Perhaps even more," he said carelessly.

Mr. Gummidge fairly gasped. He had fixed upon ten pounds as a likely sum. And now—one—two—three hundred—it was beyond the dreams even of *his* avarice! Then he suddenly remembered that the violin was not *his* to part with.

"Perhaps you would like to think it over," said the stranger quietly.

"Yes, yes," he answered hastily, "I should like to think it over."

"Very well, then, Here is my card. Should you decide to part with the instrument, drop me a line to this address, and I will communicate with my friends at once. The sooner the better, as they are all in London at present, and may leave before the end of the week."

Mr. Gummidge took the small piece of pasteboard, on which was printed in uneven characters: "Paul Anton, Professor of Music, 112 Basebrook Street, Chelsea, S.W."

"Yes, the sooner the better," he murmured absently.

The stranger moved thoughtfully towards the door, and then paused, as if struck by an afterthought. "Er—of course—I shall expect a small commission," he said.

"Certainly," replied Mr. Gummidge. He felt in a generous mood. "Say about three-and-a-half per cent.?"

"Three-and-a-half per cent. will do nicely. Not later than Friday, remember."

"I will remember," said Mr. Gummidge as one who meant it. And, with a smile and a wave of his hand, the visitor left the shop.

That same evening, as Mr. Gummidge was tenderly wiping the dust off the precious violin, and wondering what had become of

its owner, he was startled by the voice of the small Italian boy at his elbow.

"Please, sar, I 'ave brought back the shillin'."

Mr. Gummidge promptly slipped the duster into a drawer, and taking the coin out of the grimy little paw laid it on the desk before him.

"Ah, yes," he said kindly. "That is quite right. But, tell me, how is your mother?"

"She is mooch bedder, t'ank you. She 'ave gone to ze 'orspital."

"I am delighted to hear it!" said Mr. Gummidge genially. "But, of course"—he rubbed his chin pensively—"you will want some money to go on with, eh?"

The boy's face brightened. "Oh, yes, sar!" he exclaimed. "We 'ave not'ing left but my violino. One day I may 'ave to sell 'im, and then——" His lip quivered pitifully.

"Ha!" said Mr. Gummidge. "That is precisely what I want to talk to you about. Now, suppose I wish to help you; suppose, for instance, I had taken a fancy to learn the violin, and thought of buying yours, would you sell it?"

"Sell 'im! Sell my lofed violino? Oh, no, sar; I could nevver do zat!"

"Not if I offered you—er—one pound for it?"

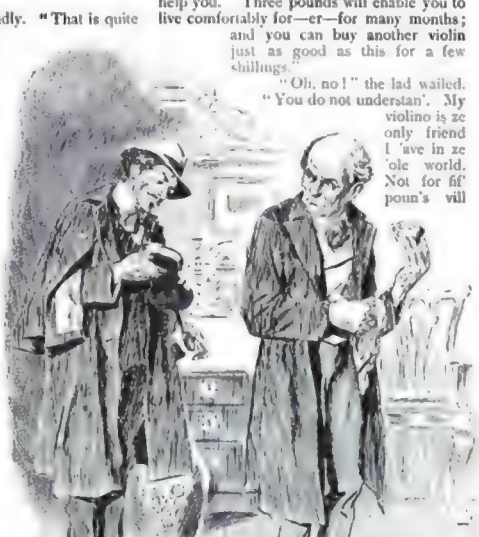
"T'ank you, sar—no. Only ze odder day a shentleman offer me two—tree poun's for 'im, and I refuse. Zat violino vas my gran'fader's and my great gran'fader's. I would not part with 'im—not for tif' poun's."

"Nonsense, boy! Think what it will mean for you. Just now you said that one day you may have to sell it, and what better opportunity could you have than this? Come, be reasonable. Shall we say—er—three pounds? It is not worth half that sum."

"Then vy offer so mooch?" said the boy shrewdly.

Mr. Gummidge cleared his throat pompously. "As I have told you, I—I wish to help you. Three pounds will enable you to live comfortably for—er—for many months; and you can buy another violin just as good as this for a few shillings."

"Oh, no!" the lad wailed. "You do not understan'. My violino is ze only friend I 'ave in ze 'ole world. Not for tif' poun's vill I sell 'im—not for tif' poun's." He repeated the latter statement with parrot-like insistence.



"Why—can it be?—yes, as I live, it is a Stradivarius!"

Mr. Gummidge knit his brows perplexedly. Then he made a final effort to beat the lad down.

"I will give you four pounds," he said, rising with an air of having spoken his last word. "Take it, or leave it, as you choose."

For a moment the lad seemed to waver, and Mr. Gummidge felt that the victory was his. His triumph was short-lived, however. With a sorrowful, yet decided shake of the head, the small boy picked up the violin and moved slowly towards the door. Mr. Gummidge was after him like a shot.

"Now, look here," he cried, "suppose we split the difference! To tell the truth, I've taken a particular fancy to this violin of yours, and that being so I—I'll give you four pounds ten for it. That's a fair enough offer."

"Then vy offer so mooch?" said the boy shrewdly.

So it was settled. Mr. Gummidge counted out the money from a greasy leather bag he kept locked in the desk. The lad took the coins, bit each one separately, and tied them carefully in the corner of the dirty red handkerchief he wore round his neck. This he thrust into his coat pocket, and then, after a lingering glance of touching sadness in the direction of his beloved violin, he passed out into the night. Mr. Gummidge blew his nose emotionally, after which he lit a small kerosene lamp, and proceeded hastily to indite a letter to Professor Paul Anton.

The reply did not come as soon as he expected. In fact, he waited three whole days without receiving any reply at all. Then a horrible doubt assailed him, and he determined to pay a visit to 112 Basebrook Street, Chelsea. Such was his state of mind that he actually chartered a hansom to take him there—a distance of some three miles or more.

The driver did not seem to know the locality very well, although he vowed he had been there many times before. At last, after innumerable windings and turnings, and repeated inquiries of tradesmen and others, he announced that the address was unknown in Chelsea. Whereupon Mr. Gummidge descended from the cab, paid the fare owing, and returned home by 'bus.

That evening things did not run with their accustomed smoothness in the Gummidge household.

The next evening he took the violin to a well-known dealer who surveyed it superciliously, and pronounced it to be worth exactly two-and-elevenpence. This, he hastened to add, was the stock price, but that he, personally, would not give two shillings for it.

Afterwards, in relating the experience to sympathetic friends, Mr. Gummidge invariably concluded his statement with this sage advice:

"Never you be tempted to help one of them aliens. If you do, you are pretty certain to be taken in as I was. Just harden your heart, and don't let your feelings get the better of you. Philanthropy may be very well as a pastime for those who continually require a change of amusement; but"—and here the speaker usually laid a fat fore-finger against his nose—"I can tell you, *it doesn't pay!*"

On The Cover

The Story of an Artist's Wooing.

By Gertie de S. Wentworth-James.

It was at a concert she first saw him.

He was seated on a side fauteuil almost on a line with her own stall, and whenever she turned her head (which was only every now and then) she met his fine, dark eyes fixed upon her in a curiously scrutinising fashion.

It would be quite foolish to pretend that Miss Diamond Deane, of 41 Parchester Gardens, S.W., was not accustomed to glances of masculine admiration, because when Nature creates a striking personality she does not intend her handiwork to go unnoticed; and Diamond's personality was particularly striking—more striking perhaps, than actually beautiful—with its vivid tints and enchantingly elusive expressions.

Yes, undoubtedly she was quite inured both to observation and admiration, but in the gaze of this stranger there was another element as well.

Was it suspicion, eagerness, triumph, or impartial appreciation that mingled with his intermittent scrutiny?

It was difficult to decide, and Di felt that she wanted a second opinion on the matter.

"Jessie," she whispered, addressing her companion under cover of an interminable Dvôrak string quartette. "Jessie, in a few minutes turn your head to the left and look as if you weren't looking, at a man seated on a line with us—no, not the grey beard and flannel shirt, but between him and the blue-spectacled lady with the brown paper-covered score!"

With cautious carelessness Miss Jessie Millbank (a companionable cousin who had reached the tragic age of thirty) glanced around as though she were admiring the faded carpets and dusty electric light globes of London's large concert-hall, until her calm, grey eyes momentarily rested between the spectacled lady and the flannel-shirted gentleman.

"Well, what do you think?" murmured Di, when the inspection was over.

"I think he's decidedly good-looking—hair a little too long, perhaps, and *I* don't care for turn-down collars, but it's a most poetic face."

"Yes, quite Byronic, isn't it? But that's not what I'm thinking about—it's the odd, intense way he keeps glancing at me when he thinks I'm not looking! *Do* notice when you have a chance. I—I feel almost nervous."

Miss Millbank *did* notice—quite skilfully from behind the ambush of her programme—with the result that when the concert was over and they were driving homewards behind a languid hansom cab horse, she felt almost as puzzled as Diamond herself.

There was certainly something very peculiar about the quality of this stranger's glances—glances which, nevertheless, contained not the least vestige of impertinence, open admiration, or any other offensive ingredient. It was as though he were trying to impress Diamond's face upon his memory without boldness or disrespect.

However, by the time Jessie and her cousin reached their grey Earl's Court home, the incident was forgotten, though had they observed another hansom which had been following unobtrusively in the wake of their

Copyright, 1908, by C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., in the United States of America.

own, it is possible the matter might have received far more serious consideration!

Three days later Diamond saw the long-haired young man again, this time at a tea-shop, where he was seated at a table immediately behind her own, and as just once she half-turned her flame-gold head surmounted by a brown picture-hat trimmed with velvet leaves, it was to catch sight of a small paper fluttering in the stranger's hand.

What did it mean? What could it mean?

And why was it that on the following Tuesday she encountered him at a library, on Wednesday in the Earl's Court Road, on Thursday outside the station, and in fact almost every day for a week?

"Have you committed any crime that's searing and burning your conscience?"

These puzzles remained without any effort at solution until one night when Diamond and Jessie were discussing matters during the fire-lit hair-brushing hour.

"I can't feel offended, you know," remarked Diamond, taking out her gold and tortoiseshell side combs, "because I'm quite sure he doesn't mean to be rude. In fact, directly he thinks that he is observed he either turns the other way, or becomes engrossed with something else. Who can he be, I wonder?"

"A madman, perhaps," suggested Jessie, settling down to repair a fringe net by means of a needle and a long back hair.

"What—because he looks at me? Not—er—necessarily, I think."

"Perhaps he's a detective! Have you committed any crime that's searing and burning your conscience?"

There was obvious flippancy in Jessie's voice, but as she spoke Diamond's pale face grew white, while with a thud the silver-backed brush fell on the carpet.

She had just remembered how, a fortnight ago, when journeying homewards by the District Railway, she had found a parcel—a parcel containing three seven-and-six-penny bottles of her favourite perfume—and that how, instead of dispatching the parcel to the Lost Property Office, she had brought it home and used its contents!

The act had been so involuntary! Jewellery or money would, of course, have been immediately delivered up or advertised, but scent seemed so trivial that she had unthinkingly adopted the "finding's keeping" method of procedure. Perhaps she had been seen by the owner; perhaps she was being watched; perhaps——

The possibilities that followed were almost too alarming for contemplation.

The next day Colonel Deane's daughter remained indoors (she felt half afraid to go out!), and even when she, her cousin, and her father stepped into the waiting brougham, which was to convey them to Mrs. Neumacher's dance, it was not without some misgivings as to whether a strong arm of the law might be stretched forward to arrest her progress.

However, they reached the big, brilliantly-lighted house without any such *contretemps*, and Diamond's fears were soon forgotten in the pleasurable knowledge of being the prettiest and best-dressed girl in the room.

Towards the middle of the evening their painstaking hostess approached, and asked Miss Deane if she had just *one* dance to spare.

"As it happens I've got two," replied Di, "because Mr. Trellard and I got muddled over our numbers, with the result that he is engaged to his *fiancée* for *my* two waltzes, and that I have considerately liberated him."

"That's *delightful!* because I've got a late arrival to fix up, and he *will* not dance except with *perfect* reversers. Solly, tell Mr. Grieve to come here, will you? Say I've *found* him a partner and——ah! Mr. Grieve, *here* you are! Miss Deane, *may* I introduce Mr. Hector Grieve?"

Then Diamond looked round, drew her breath sharply, and bowed to—*the detective!*

Hector Grieve looked singularly attractive in evening dress—he waltzed well, talked well, and—still more important from a woman's point of view—listened well. In fact, by the time the end of the evening arrived, Diamond had come to the conclusion that the detective idea had been an absurd scare, and that there was no possible reason why Mrs. Neumacher's friend should not be allowed to call on Jessie and herself the following afternoon!

Although it was a wet afternoon Diamond felt convinced that Hector Grieve would call.

Three weeks had elapsed since their first meeting, and it was wonderful with what frequency he had contrived to present himself at 41 Parchester Gardens since that time.

Sometimes it had been to bring an article on Persian cats—to which Di was devoted—sometimes to show Jessie pictures of early Flemish needlework, sometimes to ask Colonel Deane's advice (the Colonel was always generous with this inexpensive commodity) upon some unimportant matter, and to-day—well, Diamond had a very strong idea that to-day he was coming to ask for something far more tangible and likely to be taken, than advice!

Diamond was meditating upon what answer she should give him, when a parlourmaid entered the room.

"A letter just brought by special messenger, madam," she said, holding out a salver on which lay a large, square envelope addressed in a bold, flourishy, yet attractively illegible, hand-writing.

Diamond knew that writing, therefore it was with an unusual degree of promptitude that she broke the seal and read as follows:

"I cannot call upon you this afternoon because *I do not dare.* You know, surely you must know, that I was coming to ask the one question which one man should never put to more than one woman? But I have arrested my course of treachery in time by becoming a coward and seeking refuge in flight! I cannot face the consequences when you know all there is to know, which will be on December 1st—*to-morrow!* But when the infamous truth is laid bare, I beg you to believe that had I *known* you first, it would never have occurred. I acted almost involuntarily; the temptation was too great to be resisted, and I never guessed that the time would come when I should know and love *my victim!* Mrs. Neumacher's dance was one of Fate's most mischievous pranks, but yet—oh! how can I regret when it brought me to *you—you,* the woman I have learnt to adore—*you,* the woman I have cruelly wronged and affronted!

"Since you have entered my life I swear that I have done all in my power to undo the wrong committed before our introduction. But it was too late. The matter had passed out of my hands, and no intreaty of my own could arrest the inevitable; so now I can do nothing but take my departure like a coward who dares not face the fire—that cruel fire which will ignite on December 1st!

"I have left my chambers; no one knows my address, but should you find it in your heart to pardon a contrite offender, let me see the one word 'COME' under the 'Personal' column of Friday's *Daily Train.* If the message is not there I shall know that, quite justly, there is no forgiveness for me.

"HECTOR GRIEVE."

The letter fluttered to the ground, and in the one all-comprehending moment that followed Diamond knew how things were.

Hector Grieve *was* a detective after all. He had originally watched her in the interests of some individual who had lost his parcel of perfume, and now, having handed in his report, he and his conscience had slunk away before the "inevitable" occurred!

And what would be that inevitable?

Diamond (who knew nothing of crime and punishment except as depicted in current fiction) couldn't imagine. Whatever it was, there would be a compact little "par" about it in the halfpenny papers.

"THEFT BY A COLONEL'S DAUGHTER."

She could see that stimulating heading before it was printed! *Ugh!*

"The idea may seem a little far-fetched," murmured Di, as she piled on the coals (never had she felt so cold before!), "but there is no other explanation except this—my original supposition—'*I never guessed the time would come when I should know and love my victim!*' (There! his *victim!*) '*You, the woman I have cruelly wronged and affronted.*' (There's no other way he *could* have wronged and affronted me!) '*The matter had passed out of my hands.*' (Of course, he gave evidence before we were introduced!) What can I do? Nothing!—except wait for the terrible to-morrow which holds my shame! Poor Daddy!—oh! poor Daddy! To-MORROW!"

Despite people's assertion that "to-morrow never comes," the next day arrived in due course, and with it Diamond's engagement to lunch with a friend at Wimbledon.

"It seems a risk to leave the house," she whispered to Jessie, who, like many real and fictional thirty-year-old cousins, made an admirable *confidante;* "but I shan't avert Fate by stopping at home, so I may just as well go. If a blow *has* to fall, it doesn't matter when or where!"

When Diamond reached the station she found that the Wimbledon train had just gone and that she would have to put in a long wait on the platform.

"I'll buy a magazine—it may help to divert my thoughts," she murmured plaintively, moving towards the bookstall, which was gay with Christmas double numbers.

"Give me a magazine, please," she said, addressing a brisk bookstall-boy. "No; I've seen the *Middlesex*, and the *New*, and the *Hyde Park*—oh, yes, and *Appel's Annual*."

"You've mostly seen 'em all, miss," replied the youth, "except—" (moving towards a large bundle which had just arrived) "except the *Up-to-Date*—and you *can't* have seen that, 'cause it's only out to-day—published on December 1st."

"I'll have it, then," answered Diamond, putting down a shilling and stretching out her hand for the bulky periodical with the beautiful cover which—oh, Heavens above! The cover—*THE COVER!*

Diamond didn't faint, she didn't even scream, but as she gazed at the exterior of the *Up-to-Date* Christmas number, every vestige of colour left her lips, for the cover was a girl's head, *and the girl was—herself!*

Every detail of her own striking personality was portrayed—the flame-gold hair with that one careless centre-curl, which took such a long time to arrange; the scarlet lips, soft, pale, small face; deep, dark eyes; and the picture-girl was even wearing Diamond's favourite brown hat trimmed with velvet leaves!

The portrait was unmistakable, and in a few hours all her friends and acquaintances would be saying: "*Have* you seen Diamond Deane's likeness on the *Up-to-date?* Somewhat cheapening, isn't it? As if she wanted to advertise herself as an English beauty type! Ha! ha!"

Oh! it was terrible! Who could be the perpetrator of this unwarrantable impertinence?

With enraged curiosity Diamond glanced down at the artist's signature in the left-hand corner, and, as she did so, she knew that the "blow" had fallen at last!

The picture was signed "Hector Grieve"—and—*and this was December 1st!!!*

* * * * *

When Diamond reached home she found her father somewhat elated at this public tribute which had been offered to his daughter's personal charms.

"Clever young chap, that Grieve!" he remarked encouragingly. "I always wondered what his profession was—never guessed he was an artist! He must do a big splash of you for next year's Academy, and—oh! by the by, here's a letter for you. From the dauber himself, isn't it? When you reply, ask him to dine on Saturday. Clever youngster!"

In nowise soothed by her father's lenient view of the situation, Diamond hurried up to her own room, and read as follows:

"Now you know all! My vivid presumption and highly-coloured treachery faces you on every bookstall. Let me tell you how it happened, but without making any effort to excuse myself. The editor of the *Up-to-Date* commissioned me to do a cover for the Christmas number. '*Let it be just the picture of an absolutely striking and attractive-looking woman. Not regular features—the public's sick of 'em—but a face full of devilment, daring, mischief, and infinite charm. The sort of face for which a man could lose his soul!*' he said. . . . In despair I hired models and sketched rough designs, but without producing anything more striking than an ordinary picture of a pretty girl.

"Then I saw *you* at the concert. At once I knew that my inspiration was found! To reproduce your face would mean success to the *Up-to-Date* cover; so I followed you,

spied upon you like the veriest gutter cad, and tracked you to a tea-shop, where I sketched the outline of your features, with the result that a week after the concert I received a letter from the editor saying that the Christmas number cover was my best piece of work! Up till that time I had only looked upon you as a model. After Mrs. Neumacher's dance (when it was too late for the cover to be recalled) you were a *woman!* The girl I had wronged—the girl I loved! I do not dare to hope that you will forgive, though Friday morning will find me scanning the *Daily Train* 'Personal' column with a despairing and passionate eagerness." —"H. G."

In a burst of renewed fury Diamond dashed the letter to the ground.

"Forgiveness! As if I could ever think or *dream* of pardoning a—a man who—who took my face in vain!" she cried. "He can scan the *Daily Train* until he—he grows blind in the effort of looking for what isn't there! I never want to hear of him again; I never want to see him—I never——"

Here her eyes fell on a fading bunch of winter violets, drooping their scented heads over the side of a Wedgwood bowl.

He had given her those violets! His fingers had just touched hers as he laid the flowers in her hand—he had looked into her eyes—he—he——

* * * * *

In the personal column of the *Daily Train* for Friday, December 4th, there appeared quite a short announcement.

The cover was a girl's head, *and the girl was—herself!*

It consisted of one single word, "Come." In accordance with Colonel Deane's wishes, a "big splash" of Mrs. Hector Grieve, appeared at Burlington House in the following May.

The editor of the *Up-to-Date* is now a firm friend of Mr. and Mrs. Grieve, and the original drawing of the fateful Christmas cover hangs framed in Diamond's boudoir. It has the place of honour, and she would not part with it for worlds.

Really women are very much given to changing their minds!

MR. X —HIS PAGES.

I'm "Mr. X," the Specialist
For "bump" in all its stages:
The only thing my patients have
To do's to read my pages—
So, start at the beginning.
And half-way through you'll find
All your little worries
Left a mile behind.
All your little worries
Left behind a mile—
Read on to the finish,
And you'll finish with a smile.

Puzzle Portraits, Packs of ROYAL Playing-cards, or Puzzle Purses will be given as prizes to readers who forward new puzzles, problems, or other tricks which are inserted in this feature. Any readers communicating with "Mr. X," and wishing for a reply, should inclose a stamped, addressed envelope. All letters should be addressed to "Mr. X" (care of THE ROYAL MAGAZINE) 19 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

PLANTING AND GATHERING.

If you planted a clock, what member of the vegetable kingdom might you expect to appear? Why, Thyme.

If you planted a schoolboy given to telling tales? Naturally, a Peach.

If you planted soldiers drilling? Why, they would come up in Rose (rows).

If you planted a cat's skin? Fir, of course.

"Mr. X" sees some amusement in this kind of game. Accordingly he offers a prize of Five Shillings to the sender of what is, in his opinion, the best list of *five* questions and answers arranged on the plan shown above. Five, and only five, please.

Letters or postcards must be plainly marked on the outside, "Planting," be addressed "Mr. X," care of THE ROYAL MAGAZINE, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., and must reach "Mr. X" by February 18th.

A MAN AND HIS MONEY.

Last Monday morning George started for his work with a certain sum of money in his pocket. On the way he had to cross a bridge at which he pays toll—one penny. During the day he spent exactly half his money (less, of course, the penny toll), and returned home, paying another penny as he recrossed the bridge. This scheme he continued until the Saturday evening—a penny toll in the morning, spends half of what then remains, and a penny toll again in the evening.

On reaching home on Saturday night he had just one penny left.

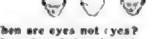
How much did George start the week with?

TERRIBLE TRAM-CAR CRIME.

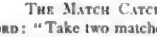
BERTRAM: "I say, Charles, did you hear about that man throwing his *Son* off the tram this evening?"

CHARLES (naturally thinking Bertram means "son"): "No! Is that a fact?"

BERTRAM: "Yes, rather; I picked it up, and so read the latest football results for nothing."



Q. When are eyes not eyes?
A. When the wind makes them water.



THE MATCH CATCH.

BEDFORD: "Take two matches."

TEDFORD (producing a box of matches): "Yes."

BEDFORD (affecting not to notice what Tedford is doing): "Let them be of equal length."

TEDFORD: "Yes."

BEDFORD: "Let them lie end to end, and at right angles to them let there be another match."

TEDFORD: "Yes."

BEDFORD: "Now, how far apart do you think those matches ought to be in order not to interfere with one another?"

TEDFORD: "Oh, an eighth of an inch would do."

BEDFORD: "Eighth of an inch! A hundred yards, more like!"

TEDFORD: "A hundred yards! What are you talking about?"

BEDFORD: "Cricket matches, of course. What are you fooling about with those lucifers for?"

A CAT AND DOG AFFAIR

If Bobby Bones has seven dogs,
And every dog is white,
And a dozen cats come chasing round,
Each one as black as night,
And each two cats have eighteen lives,
Less three destroyed by rats,
How many lives must three dogs take
Before they kill eight cats?

SHORTHAND.

Can you read the following?

CC

SAW

No; it is nothing to do with see-saws; simply—"The season was backward." The c's on "was" backward.

WHAT IS IT?

Some of "Mr. X's" correspondents write terribly bad hands. What, for example, can you make of the following?—an ordinary English word.

Q. When is a bonnet not a bonnet?
A. When it "becomes" a lady

THE PUN EXCRUCIATING.

"MR. X'S" OFFICE-BOY: "I've just made up a little riddle, sir."

"MR. X": "Ha! Good! I'm afraid you can't catch me; but still, you can try."

"MR. X'S" O.B.: "Thank you, sir. My first is a colour, my second is a colour, and my whole is a colour. What is it?"

"MR. X": H'm, h'm, h'm. I'm afraid this is something rather silly. You'd better be careful, my lad."

"MR. X'S" O.B.: "The answer is, Baby. *Bay* is a colour, isn't it?"

"MR. X": "Certainly—but what about the second syllable?"

"MR. X'S" O.B.: "Well, a bee (*by*) is the *culler* of honey, sir."

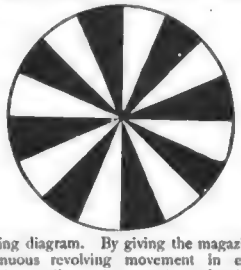
"MR. X": "Be very, very careful."

"MR. X'S" O.B.: "And a baby is a *yeller*, sir."

[*Sacked.*]

WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

Standing with your back to the light, hold the ROYAL (open at this page) by the bottom right-hand corner. Now stare at the accompanying diagram. By giving the magazine a continuous revolving movement in either direction, a silver coin, sometimes the size of a sixpence, sometimes of a shilling, will be seen in the diagram.



A USEFUL RECIPE.

CHARLES: "Do you know how to prevent fish from smelling?"

JAMES: "No."

CHARLES: "By holding their noses."

[*Very smart, no doubt; but I don't think fish can smell.*
—ED. ROYAL.

Then there's no need to hold their noses.—"MR. X."]

THINGS WHICH MONEY CANNOT BUY.

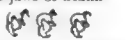
A boot to fit the foot of a mountain.

A heel on which to place the spur of the moment.

A collar for a neck of land.

A bit for the mouth of a river.

Teeth for the jaws of death.



THE FIVE-CROSS PUZZLE.

Lay ten matches in a row. Now obtain five crosses by moving one match over *two* intervening matches and on to another so as to form a cross, and so on till the five crosses are formed.

RESULTS.

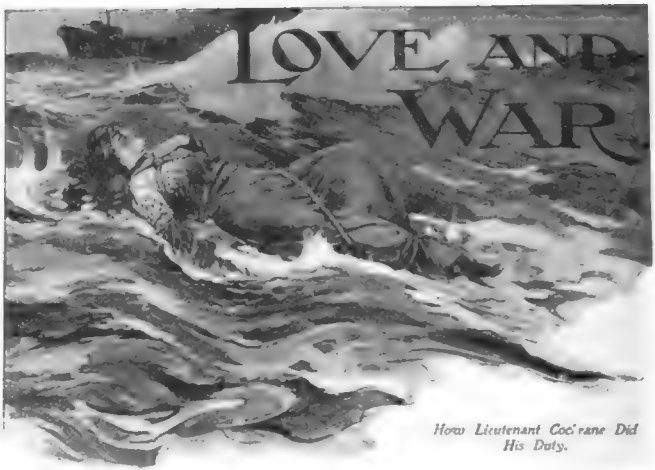
THE VOWELS.—In the September ROYAL "MR. X" offered six packs of ROYAL Playing cards for a competition under this title. No fewer than forty-five correct [illegible] first score. "MR. X" [illegible] by your eighteen little ones for 6 4 2 6 6 cards a piece to be written privately [illegible] of the forty-five, commencing a special competition with the same prizes, for which only they will be eligible.

A MAN AND HIS MONEY.—£1 is 1d.

A CAT AND DOG AFFAIR.—60.

WHAT IS IT?—Mackerel.

THE FIVE CROSS PUZZLE.—Numbering the matches from left to right the requisite moves are—7 to 10, 4 to 8, 9 to 3, 1 to 6, 6 to 9.



How Lieutenant Cochrane Did His Duty.

By T. G. Dowling-Maitland.

The gale roared up from the sou'-west, raking up as it did so a cross sea, which broke up over the destroyer's turtle-back and deluged her with water.

The look-outs dotting the hastily-rigged life-lines cursed the weather vigorously. Hour in and hour out they had clung to their precarious hold, staring with smarting eyes into the darkness ahead of them, till, of a sudden, a light showed to the starboard.

"Cruiser, Wilkinson?"

The signalman transmitted the intelligence to the bridge, where Mark Cochrane, his binoculars glued to his eyes, was already taking stock of the stranger.

"Cruiser—signallin', sir—number and letter wanted—private night code."

Mechanically Cochrane nodded, as the great, shadowy hull of a cruiser loomed up out of the night, the shutter of its signal lantern imperiously clicking out a message. Then the signalling ceased, and a bugle's notes echoed fitfully out above the roar of the gale, pausing as the "64" flashed back its answer.

"'*Berisford,' hulled badly—Forward barbette broken down—Engaged German squadron sou'-east of Finisterre. 'Juno' sunk. Two German units damaged. Strength of German squadron unknown.*"

The signalman's monotonous voice bawled out the cruiser's message to the bridge, when Cochrane, closing his binoculars, sheltered himself behind the weather-cloths to shield his face from the sting of the sleet.

The "64" slipped away through the night, leaving the Eddystone far away on her starboard beam. With lights doused, she held on her way, her screws slowed down to ninety to avoid straining the engines. The "64" carried dispatches. Caution as well as speed was required to get them safely through to an admiral, who, all unconscious that Germany had thrown down the gauntlet to England, was steaming with his squadron at half-speed across the Atlantic.

So the destroyer held on through the night, thrashing heavily down Channel.

As dawn broke grey and threatening in the east, another ten revolutions were knocked off the screws, and Cochrane's face, bleached with salt rime, grew anxious as he turned to the sou'-west, where a blur began to show up clearly on the horizon.

It was too far off as yet to determine its nature, so the Acting-sub turned his binoculars

Copyright, 1906, by C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., in the United States of America.

on a black mass which came lurching into view on the crest of a wave to port. As he did so, a gasp escaped his lips. Handing his glasses to his Second, he said:

"Smith, what do you make that out to be?"

Once again the black mass came into view on the crest of a wave, and the Second, with a startled exclamation, cried:

"*Heavens! It's a woman lashed to a grating!*"

His words fell on unheeding ears. Cochrane, deaf to his asked-for reply, leant over the bridge rail, as the coxswain steered the vessel towards the floating grating.

Fortune for once proved kind to its lonely and senseless passenger, for a billow, seizing her in its grip, broke itself against the smoke-stacks of the "64," and ere it had time to carry its unconscious burden over the starboard side, a dozen hands had seized the grating.

Once more the destroyer's bows came up to the wind. Cochrane's teeth chattered with cold, as, swinging himself off the bridge—where his Second now stood in command—he made his way along the heaving deck till he gained the side of his strange passenger.

Senseless she lay, with her matted chestnut hair lying in sodden wisps across an ashen face, which even the close proximity of death could not rob of its natural beauty. For a moment Cochrane stared at the half-drowned girl; then a frightened gasp escaped him.

"Lena!" he cried, dropping on his knees beside the senseless figure. "Lena! Merciful Heavens! *Is she dead?*"

He placed his hand feverishly over the girl's heart.

It beat!

Overcome with joy, he staggered to his feet and held the slim figure to him with one arm, whilst with his left hand he clung to the life-line, fighting his way aft to the ward-room hatchway. None of the crew ventured to help the ashen-faced Acting-sub.

Each unit of the destroyer's company gathered on her sloppy deck recognised that he was face to face with a drama which might—if Fate so willed—turn to tragedy.

The most dull-witted among the crew realised that what to them was but an ordinary rescued being was, to Cochrane, the only woman in the world. It needed no Solon to discover that fact.

Meanwhile, on the bridge, Second-Lieutenant Smith was staring at the blur which had risen into prominence above the horizon with the first grey light of the dawn.

The blur was joined now by two other smudges to the windward of it. There was a grim smile of determination curling the youngster's lips as, turning to the coxswain, he imparted to him the knowledge that they were battleships.

"They're coming up fast, too," he cried. "Pass the word along for Mr. Cochrane, and——"

"No need. I'm here." A sharp voice broke in on his utterance, as the Lieutenant stepped on to the narrow platform of the bridge. "What's the matter?"

"Three battleships coming up from the sou'-east, sir. Can't make out if they are ours or——"

He paused abruptly to cling on to the rail as the boat shipped a heavy sea amidships.

"They're Germans!" rapped out Cochrane, shutting up his binoculars with a snap. "The leader is the *Kaiser*. I'd know her anywhere by her bunched up bows. We've got to run the gauntlet this trip if we are to get through to Admiral Sir John Greely. We're steaming clean into the squadron which knocked the *Berisford* out of the running and sank the *Juno*. Yes, it is the squadron right enough. Do you see, there are four more units coming up from the sou' west!"

Down swept the gale with a renewed force.

"It's going to be a running fight, sir," gasped the Sub, through the fury of the blast.

Cochrane nodded. Leaning over the bridge rail, he roared:

"*Tubes!*—fore and aft tubes, gunner. Swing out—we'll be under fire directly."

In a moment the vessel throbbed with excitement. The tube's crews, dodging the smashing seas, worked like Titans; then there came a silence, during which the Chief Artificer, grimed with oil and coal dust, crept on to the bridge.

"Sir," he cried, his north-country burr rising prominently above the howl of the gale, "she'll no stand another turn. Sixty-five she's doing—she canna do mair. Drive her quicker and ye'll stand an unco braw chance of straining her engines, runnin' her bearin's red-hot, and shaking every bolt out o' her. I'll no tak' the responsibility, sir."

Cochrane set his teeth hard. Seizing the grimy Chief by the sleeve of his oil-stained coat, he replied to the engineer's plaint by

pointing ahead of him at the horizon, where numerous growing specs laboured in the trough of the waves.

"McNabb," he hissed between his set teeth. "Do you see those?"

The Chief Artificer's eyes started.

"*Germans,*" snarled Cochrane. "*Germans every one of them!* Sir John Greely's squadron lies at the back of that lot, and we have to get through them somehow. Give me speed and I'll do it—but I must have speed. You hear me, McNabb—*I must have speed!*"

The Scot's face gleamed with the light of battle.

"Speed is it ye want, sir? I'll gie it ye if it wrenches the engines off their bed-plates!"

Down into the stifling engine-room he sped, and the screws threshed the stormy waters with a quickening rhythm. With can and spanner in hand he crawled towards a heated bearing to work calmly with his nut-wrench amid the roaring maze of leaping rods.

The stokers—their coal-blackened bodies stripped naked to their canvas trousers—used their "devils" and "slicers" with frantic energy on the glowing masses within the furnaces, as they swung the great iron doors open and shut with a wondrous regularity born of long practice. The blistering heat of the flames was preferable to McNabb's abuse.

Meanwhile, on the bridge, Cochrane stared ahead at the two sinister, black shapes racing towards him. Alternately he glanced from them to the 12-pounder crew, as he anxiously felt the play of the vessel beneath his feet. Would its frail hull, he wondered, buckle beneath the strain to which he was subjecting it?

"How's the girl?"

Smith's bluntly-posed question roused him from his unpleasant train of thought. He started.

"She has only just come to," he replied drily, his voice sounding harsh and unnatural even to his own ears. "She, it appears, was left on board the *Bremen* when she sank. There wasn't room in the boats for her, they said—the cowards. I told her where she was, and that we had no convenience for—for women on board the "64." I have left her one of my suits to wear till she can dry her own things. There's a good fire in the ward-room."

Cochrane closed his teeth with a fierce snap.

Smith had not sailed for a fortnight under the Acting-sub not to know that this was a signal to consider the subject under discussion closed. Clearing the coal dust and salt rime out of his smarting eyes, therefore, the Sub once more stared out over the waste of sea ahead. The sinister shapes were nearer now, the smoke rising from their stacks being caught and dragged out by the wind in plumes nearly a mile long.

"*Tubes!*" yelled Cochrane over the bridge rail. "Tubes port and starboard — swing out. Smartly, lads, and—*stand by!*"

Sheets of salt spray swept up off the turtle-back to batter against the bridge as the bow gun raised its muzzle for a sixteen hundred yard gauge.

The crew were ready for the coming fight.

Cochrane stared ahead at the hostile vessels sweeping towards him. So intent, indeed, was he on his observation, that he failed to notice the slight, girlish figure, which, clad in thick serge and oilskin, had gained the bridge. It was not until he felt the touch of a hand upon his arm, that he turned to stare with a startled surprise into the glorious face of the girl beside him. The sting of the gale had brought a colour into the pallid cheeks and lips. Life once more glowed brightly in the dancing eyes.

"Lena!" gasped Cochrane in amazement, "how did you get up here?"

"A sailor helped me along the deck," she replied merrily. "It was a terribly hard job to get here, but I did it. It was so lonely in that stuffy little cabin, Mark, and I felt—so bored! Is that the fleet?"

She pointed as she spoke to the giant hulls which were now plainly visible ahead of the destroyer.

The lines of Cochrane's face grew set and stern. None knew better than he how small a chance the "64" stood of getting clear of the enemy.

"Lena," he said bitterly, "those ships are Germans. We have got to fight our way through them, and—go below, Lena, for the love of Heaven. These decks will be an inferno in a few minutes, and the bridge—is no place for you."

Despite his most valiant efforts for the contrary, his voice shook. The girl was, however, made of sterner stuff than he. Bred from a long line of sea-dogs, the blood of her ancestors seemed, after a second's chill, to run riot through her veins. She was by the side of the man she loved, and with him she felt a confidence which she would

otherwise have lacked. Peril to her, when faced by his side, seemed to be robbed of half its horrors.

With Cochrane it was far different. His high-strung nature was on the rack. His prayer had hitherto been that if he must die it might be facing the foe, and in a fight like the one which was approaching. Now—a lump rose in his throat, and he gripped the bridge rail with a tenseness that made his knuckles stand out white from amid their surrounding tan.

"Do you think that we shall do it, Mark?"

"No."

His voice sounded hoarse and strained.

"Would it be cowardly to—to show them our heels?" The girl's voice trembled slightly as she posed the question.

Cochrane set his teeth.

"I'm carrying dispatches," he replied tonelessly. "My orders are to deliver them to Admiral Greely. There must be no surrender, so—I've got to get through or—go to the bottom."

As Smith moved with an innate delicateness further along the swinging platform, the girl drew closer to the Acting-sub. A stray, clinging tendril of her hair, caught by the wind, swept across his face, and again the lump rose in his throat.

"Darling," she said, a strange note of passion vibrating her voice. "Don't—don't send me away from here. I don't think that I could face death—alone, down there in that stuffy—lonely little cabin. If I have to die—let me die here with you, dear. You won't ask me—to die alone, will you, Mark? You couldn't be so cruel to me as—that, dearest, could you, for I love you so, and—you love me—don't you, darling?"

Cochrane's set face paled, and his smarting eyes ached as the pleading voice fell on his ear. None other heard her trembling words save the coxswain, and he gripped the smooth wheel he held the tighter, cursing the Germans the while. He was married, with a wife and three children waiting for his home-coming in Shields. He realised better than did his commander what it cost the girl to be brave—what courage it needed on her part to keep from showing the fear which gnawed her heart.

Then 850 lb. of shell screamed overhead, to burst a mile to leeward.

The port 12-inch gun in the *Kaiser's* forward barbette had opened the ball.

The projectile recalled Cochrane to himself. For a moment his fingers closed round the girl's—then the Acting-sub became the man once more, his individuality merging into that of the fighting machine he commanded, as he roared:

"Bow gun—starboard destroyer—1000 yards. Bow gun—fire!"

Cochrane bellowed his injunction as a German destroyer, looming up on the lee quarter, swung her aft tube to starboard. For a moment his voice shrilled above the sough of the gale ere it was silenced by the rattle of the 12-pounder.

Manned by Barts, late of the *Black Prince*, the deadly weapon hit the destroyer in its for'ard smokestack, and, smashing it, allowed the imprisoned flames to escape from its heater. A cheer burst from the crew of the bow quick-firer, to be dulled in an explosion of green light as the "64's" pole-mast, cut in two, was carried away, and fell into the sea.

Barts' jaw set grimly as, depressing the muzzle of his weapon, he let shot after shot scream over the churning waste at the nearer of the two oncoming destroyers. His aim was accurate to a ghastly extent. One of the quick-firer's deadly projectiles struck the German's aft tube as its torpedo was in the act of leaving it. With a deafening explosion the destroyer crumpled up, to vanish beneath the surges in a mass of flames.

The girl was quivering like an aspen leaf, her small white teeth pressed so tightly against her lower lip in her efforts to still its tremor that the blood spurted up beneath the tension. Her voice did not join in the deep-throated cheer which greeted this exhibition of the gunners' accurate fire. Her eyes were turned on the second destroyer, which, spurting flame from its bow quick-firer, was bearing swiftly down on their port quarter. The two vessels kept up a heavy fire on each other, but the roaring seas rendered accuracy impossible, and the two destroyers drew abreast unscathed by their gunners' firing.

Then a glistening body leapt from the Teuton's fore tube, a streak of bursting bubbles marking its swift progress towards the "64." Foaming and hissing, the torpedo sped on its way, whilst its parent vessel, vomiting clouds of fire and cinders, sped by ere Cochrane, awaking to his peril, yelled:

"Starboard — Bourke — *starboard* man! Jam your helm for the love of Heaven!"

Like lightning the coxswain swung round the spokes he held, as a splinter from a bursting shell, ripping his shoulder, wrung a cry from his lips.

Then the port and aft quick-firers opened fire as the "64" swerved just in time to allow the torpedo to hiss past her bows. Not so fortunate was the German, for McGinnis, working the aft gun, plugged her squarely. Glancing off a davit, the projectile ripped up the deck ere it exploded among the boilers.

In an instant a cloud of steam and flame ascended towards the heavens. Then an explosion rose above the dull roar of heavy guns, as the *Kaiser* brought her heavy armament to bear on the vessel, the sting of which had already sent two of Germany's finest destroyers to the bottom.

Shot and shell came screaming over the destroyer from the great battleship's batteries; then a cruiser to starboard started to rain projectiles between the rattle of its quick-firers. Cochrane, seizing the spokes of the wheel from the fainting grasp of the Irish coxswain, boldly brought her bows up to the wind, heading her straight for the gap which lay between the *Kaiser* and the cruiser.

The act was courageous to the point of sublimity. It was one of the greatest in the annals of that ghastly naval war, for the manœuvre was not the outcome of a mad impulse, or of a fevered fancy, but the result of a carefully worked-out plan. Cochrane was a born commander. His brain was quick to see that neither battleship nor cruiser would dare to bring their heavy broadside batteries to bear on the "64," as she swept between them, for fear of damaging each other.

Barts, screaming in his agony, reeled backwards.

Given a little luck, aided by the heaving waves, which made her a mark extremely difficult to hit, the destroyer might be able to run the first part of the deadly gauntlet in safety.

The Germans, to give them their credit, were quick to comprehend the gallant Britisher's manœuvre, and the warships vomited a sheet of flame from their batteries and fighting tops at the destroyer as she raced towards them. Cochrane saw the storm of lead and steel coming. Hauling the plucky girl face down on the bridge, he screamed, his voice rising high above the gale:

"To cover! To cover for your lives!"

Not a moment

The torpedo . . . getting home, blew forty feet of steel plating out of the battleship's broadside.

too soon did he yell the warning, for barely had the words time to die away, than a hurricane of lead swept across the destroyer.

Shot through the mouth and brain, the luckless Bourke sprawled dead at his post, and lay still. Then his disfigured body started slithering along the sodden decking. The bow guns ceased firing as Barts, screaming in his agony, reeled backwards, his hands covering his face. A sea sweeping past buried him in its trough.

Then tongues of flame roared up through the socket of suddenly obliterated smoke-stack "3," firing alike the slack heaps and the body of a man lying abaft it for a moment.

Mechanically the Acting-sub turned, amid the horror, to glance at the white, drawn face of the girl behind him.

Her eyes were glassy with terror, as, leaning against the shuddering wall of the conning tower, she watched his chafed and bleeding fingers closing the circuit of the port tube.

To port, the great battleship noted its peril, and a bugle shrilled "out nets" to cope with the threatened danger.

With something akin to a savage joy, Cochrane closed the circuit of the port tube. A fierce smile drew his blackened lips back over his teeth, as he saw the German sailors rush on to the net shelves along the battleship's length, and throw the nets over the side. With frantic energy, they seized hold of the loose falls and, hauling madly on the powerful purchase blocks, swung the great steel booms out on their hinges, which, aided by "bearing out" spars, groaned swiftly into position. The manœuvre, smartly executed as it was, proved to be too late to save the great vessel from the sting of her wasp-like enemy. Too late were the great nets dropped, for the torpedo of the "64" getting home, blew forty feet of steel plating out of the battleship's broadside. Struck in the after port magazine, the great vessel sagged heavily to port, as she drifted away to sou'-west, her batteries blazing aimlessly.

Again a hail of projectiles raked the destroyer, strewing the deck with dead and wounded. The crew of the starboard quick-

firer, who but a second before had been working like madmen, each doing the work of two, were wiped out with one exception, and he, with a broken arm and staggering blindly up on to the bridge, had but the strength to salute and report, ere he collapsed face downwards on the deck, to slip up and down along its length with each roll of the vessel.

Behind the bow quick-firer, a gunner, holding his broken jaw in one hand, was training his gun on the enemy—indomitable—cursing out his agony in inarticulate oaths. For a moment his smothered verbiage rang fitfully out on the roar of the gale, till silenced by a shell.

The German gunner behind his "9.2" on the cruiser had well guessed his angle. His projectile struck the 12-pounder squarely on its mountings, wiping out it and its crew, ere its fragments, deflecting, wrenched the cap from the conning tower, and buckled smokestack "2."

"Keep your courage up, Lena," Cochrane shouted, as swinging round the smooth wheel he held, he dashed the blood which blinded him from his eyes, while his hand closed over the starboard tube circuit. "Keep your courage up. We'll be through this in a minute; our engines are holding well."

His voice came in fitful snatches above the rattle of the batteries. Shell after shell screamed wide, to plough up the raging sea. The reeling destroyer was a difficult mark to hit, for all that the furnaces were sending sheets of flame from the sockets of the two wrecked smokestacks, scorching a wounded sailor, who, lying back downwards on the smouldering slack, piteously besought a mate to shoot him.

Again a shell burst over the bridge, smashing one of its stays. A fragment of metal, glittering cruelly as it came, swept down from the skies, pinning the eighteen-year old Sub, Smith, from breast to back. Jerking his head back, he sprawled sideways with a crash on to the bridge and died.

A dull groan of insensate rage jerked from Cochrane's lips. A groan hushed into insignificance amid the scream of terror wrung from the tortured soul of the woman beside him.

Cochrane's every nerve was on the rack. The horrors though which he was passing appalled him to such an extent that he could have laid himself down and shrieked in a fight for relief. In twenty minutes he had aged ten years, and his mouth twitched as, closing the circuit of the starboard tube, he relinquished the wheel to a sailor, who had sprung on to the bridge.

"Lena! Merciful Heavens, Lena, my darling, don't! Don't—it wrings my very heart."

He held her trembling, quivering form close to his, imprinting a cheering kiss on her face ere he let her go. The kiss was wet, and, raising her hand to her cheek to dry it, she found her fingers stained a sinister crimson. An awful nausea seized her, and she clutched desperately at the bridge-rail.

The cruiser, with a mighty clap, seemed to burst upwards in a flare of fire.

No sound escaped Cochrane's lips, but his bloodshot eyes turned towards a second battleship bearing up towards them, and his haggard gaze glanced furtively to the sou'-west, where half-a-dozen smudges were coming into prominence. He groaned in spirit, glancing aft at the tube his few remaining men were working.

The "64" had still her sting, and the enemy should feel it.

The quartermaster disabused him of this idea with brutal candour.

"Tube's jammed, sir — that last shot did it."

Cochrane swore softly.

Quick-firers against the batteries of a battleship!

Then a shell burst over the destroyer.

The angle was perfect, the "64," heeling over beneath the impact till the raging sea roared over her lee quarter. Her aft funnel was crumpled up altogether as the projectile exploded in the engine-room. In an instant the starboard high pressure was wrecked, and McNabb, his back broken, reeled on the starboard engine starting-platform to fall headlong down into the crank pit.

O'Brien, the Second, shut off steam like a maniac, letting the destroyer drive on her port engines as, leaning over the motionless starboard machinery, he stared at the corpse beneath him.

He clung frenziedly to a crank head as the "64" reeled to port. The destroyer had again been struck, and the port and useless quick-firer had now been torn off. On the bridge Cochrane, haggard and blood-stained, stared helplessly at the battleship which was raking her at close range. Red-hot splinters of steel spurted up from cowls, davits, bollards—the very deck itself—as the destroyer sagged through the waste of waters.

He held her trembling, quivering form close to his, imprinting a cheering kiss on her face ere he let her go.

Cochrane dragged the girl to the shelter of the shot and shell-dented conning-tower.

An awful calm possessed her now. Her eyes were upturned towards the heavens, and, whilst men cursed and killed, she prayed as in her life she had never prayed before.

The sailor at the helm sank to the deck as they approached. With a curse Cochrane kicked the dead body out of the way, gripping the wheel which had been saved as miraculously as had been their lives. Then lyddite swept away the crew of the aft quick-firer.

Then the starboard quick-firer sounded above the roar of battle, till a shell destroyed the gallant men, and Cochrane, turning, realised that he and the woman he loved *were alone on the deck of the ship.*

Below in the stokehold stokers wielded their "devils" and "slicers" madly, driven by slave-driver O'Brien. They were doomed every man Jack of them, and they knew it, though they continued to feed the hungry furnaces under locked hatches as though there was no such thing as thickening steam in the ash-pits.

It was the heroism of the commonplace.

To the sou'-west the smudges, merging into battleships, forged ahead under forced draught. Then a dazzling flash of light coming from the forward barbette of the leader wrung an exclamation of surprise from the lips of the Acting-sub of the sinking destroyer, as he saw a shell strike the vessel which was raking him so mercilessly. With starting eyes he stared, then shouted in a piping voice:

"Greely, by Heaven! I'll deliver the dispatches yet, my——"

Green flame danced before him as he reeled back against the wall of the conning-tower, his bleeding fingers yet gripping the half of the wheel he held. Ice-chilled, he waited for death to claim him as it had done so many of his shipmates. Then he opened his eyes. As he did so a scream left his lips—a sobbing scream of horror wrung from the tortured soul of a man in agony.

The shell which had passed him by when it wrecked the conning-tower had struck the girl to the decking of the bridge.

Kneeling, he lifted her in his arms. Her moaning ceased, and her arms crept clingingly around his neck.

"Mark," she gasped, painfully raising her face to his. "Mark—you—you have been always so good to me that it seems hard—so hard that I should lose you, doesn't it?"

The plaintive query brought the hot tears in a scalding gush to his eyes.

Clumsily he tried to bind her wound, and failing, whimpered plaintively like a beaten child.

"Mark," she murmured, "you—were my very life, and—oh, Mark, darling, we were to have been married at Easter. Do you remember the little church on—the Cumberland brae? It was—so sweet—so—but there will be no Easter for us now, Mark. No Easter—but you will not forget me, will you? for I love you so, my darling."

"*Forget?*" he moaned.

"Kiss me, Mark! It—it is so—so dark, darling, so dark, and—kiss——"

They touched—clung together—for a moment; then, with a shuddering sigh, her spirit winged its way to the Great Unknown.

A shell swept over his head, but he heard it not.

The lips he pressed to his were chilling. Panic gripped his heart, numbing its action.

"Lena!"

He buried his face on her bosom, great convulsive sobs which seemed to rend his very being shaking his shoulders.

The woman he loved was dead.

Then, loosing his hold, he allowed the dread figure to fall limply on to the decking of the shattered bridge, as leaning against the rail, he tore at the collar of his coat in a fight for air, and stared around.

The battleship had ceased fire now. The British squadron had claimed alike its attention and that of the rest of the German fleet. Cochrane noticed nothing, however—not even the destroyer flying the white ensign which crept towards him.

Her Acting-sub found the "64" sinking by the stern, its company killed to the last man, with the exception of its commander and the engine-room crew.

He was babbling of green fields, of spring, and of an old grey church on the side of a Cumberland brae. He was going to be married at Easter, he told his rescuer, with a whimpering laugh.

In his blood-stained hand he held a flat, black dispatch box, which Admiral Greely got twenty minutes later.

Lieutenant Mark Cochrane had fulfilled his orders to the letter, but the British public never knew what it cost him to carry those dispatches through, for Lena was claimed by the sea, whilst Lieutenant Cochrane, now a hopeless imbecile, still babbles of the church on the Cumberland brae and of the Easter wedding which will never be his.

AN IMPOSSIBILITY.

EDWIN: "What do you think of that artist who painted cobwebs on his ceiling so truthfully that the housemaid wore herself into an attack of nervous prostration trying to sweep them down?"

ANGELINA: "There may have been such an artist, but never such a housemaid."

* * * * *

THE POET'S MISTAKE.

Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little long;
A certain bard has told us so,
But, sad to say, he's wrong.
Should anyone be unconvinced
By just my simple word,
My own requirements amply prove
The poet is absurd.

I'm always wanting scores of things,
And mostly want them long;
I've wanted some things years, and so
The poet *must* be wrong.
He seems to say: Whate'er men wants
He's pretty sure to get—
I've wanted some things long enough,
And haven't got them yet.

I'm nearly always wanting cash—
Just why I cannot tell;
And four times every day, at least,
I want a meal as well.
I've countless other wants besides,
But why write all the lot?
All I have said is true, and so
The poet's words are not.

H. J. B.

* * * * *

THE SPIRIT OF HER SEX.

OLD LADY (entering the shop): "Please will you show me some flat irons?"

SHOPMAN: "With pleasure."

After looking at about half-a-dozen bundles, the lady saw one the right size, and asked the price.

SHOPMAN: "Half-a-crown, please. Shall I send it?"

OLD LADY: "Oh, no! I don't want to buy it. I have just bought one across the road, and I thought I had paid too much."

BUSINESS ACUMEN.

"That was a narrow escape Bildesgate had, wasn't it? You know, he was just about to marry a girl, when he found that she spent £300 a year on her dresses."

"Yes, but he's married all the same."

"True, but he didn't marry that girl."

"He didn't? Whom did he marry then?"

"Her dressmaker."

* * * * *

ENCOURAGING HIS WHIM.

IRATE FATHER: "I'm getting tired of this nonsense. You've been engaged to that young man for six months. Does he ever intend to marry you?"

DAUGHTER: "You must have patience, papa. Remember he's an actor."

IRATE FATHER: "What has that to do with it?"

DAUGHTER: "He's fond of long engagements."

* * * * *

A WELCOME INVITATION.

"Can you help me a little?" said a tramp poking his head into a country shop.

"Why don't you help yourself," said the proprietor angrily.

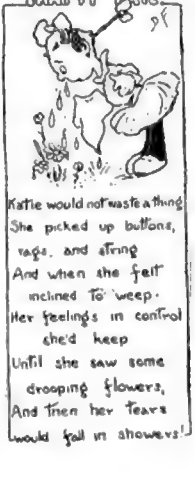
"Thank you, I will," said the tramp, as he picked up a Dutch cheese and two loaves of bread, and disappeared like a lightning-streak, followed by half-a-dozen lumps of coal.

* * *

DIPLOMACY.

"Nora, I don't want you to talk so long with the milkman in the morning."

"But mum, when he's busy lookin' in me eyes he lets the milk run on, and you get a quart when you only pay for a pint."



"No," said Miss G. Sharp decidedly, "I cannot associate with you."

"Why?" asked poor D. Flat.

"Because you are such a base note," replied the lady.

IMAGINATION.

To all young men there comes a time when into love they fall.
How strange it seems, this wondrous new sensation!
And feelings far beyond all words their youthful bosoms thrill.
Deep longing, worship, joy, and adoration.
Long weeks they hesitate to put their future to the test;
At last they make their trembling declaration;
And oh! the bliss and rapture when she softly answers "yes"—
The rest I leave to your imagination.

Now once I fell in love myself, 'twas many years ago.
I loved my little charmer to distraction;
She really was a lovely girl, and had some money, too,
Which was a great additional attraction.
Alas! one dread and awful day, her Pa came on the scene;
In spite of all his daughter's lamentation,
He uttered many savage threats, and sternly bade me Go.
The rest I leave to your imagination.

Herbert J. Brandon.

* * *

MADE UP.

ANGEL CHILD: "Aunt Daisy, what is meant by a 'fictitious character'?"

AUNT DAISY: "That means one that is made up."

ANGEL CHILD: "Oh, yes! Then you're a fictitious character, aren't you, Auntie?"

* * *

THE UNKINDEST CUT OF ALL.

Mrs. de Bride was entertaining callers. After they had left she remarked to her husband:

"I hope they didn't see my walking shoes lying there, they would think me untidy if they did."

"Oh, if they saw them they probably thought they were mine," answered her husband in a consoling tone.

And she hasn't spoken to him since.

* * * * *

NICE LITTLE HINT FROM THE BARBER.

A suspicious-looking individual entered a barber's shop, and while being shaved casually remarked:

"I suppose a good many of your customers forget to pay?"

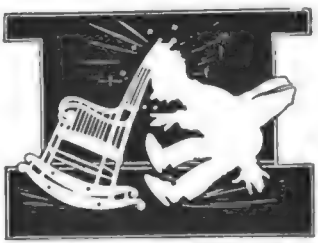
"No, sir," the barber replied. "There was a time when I used to give credit, but I never do now. In fact, nobody asks for it any more."

"How's that?"

"Well, you see," said the barber, trying the edge of his razor on his thumbnail, "whenever I shaved a gentleman who asked me to mark it up I put a nick in his nose with my razor and kept tally that way. They very soon didn't want to run up bills."

There was a tremor in the customer's voice as he asked beneath the lather:

"Do you object to being paid in advance?"



Spiritualist: "Did you ever go into a dark room where you could see nothing, and yet feel that something was there?"

Cheerly: "Yes, frequently I and the something, unfortunately, generally turned out to be a rocking-chair."

AN AUTHORITY.

DOCTOR (to Pat's wife, after examining Pat, who has been run down by a motor): "Madam, I fear your husband is dead."

PAT (feebly): "No, I ain't dead yet."

PAT'S WIFE: "Hush, Pat, the gentleman knows better than you."

* * *

HIGH-PRICED ART.

FRIEND: "I say, George, what does this bill of fivepounds mean?"

AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHER: "You told me that if I'd take half-a dozen photos of your house you'd gladly stand the expense. That's the expense."

"Are you in pain, my little man?" asked the kind old gentleman.

"No," answered the boy. "The pain's in me."

TOO LITERAL.

"This ain't what I ordered," said a countryman at a London restaurant, pointing to two slices of venison on his plate.

"You ordered venison," said the waiter.

"Yes, I did; but I ordered haunch of venison, just as the bill of fare has it. Them ain't no haunch; them's slices."

* * *

THE RETORT COURTEOUS.

MR. D'AVENUE: "My stars! More money? What on earth did you do with all I gave you last week?"

MRS. D'AVENUE: "Well, I used a little of it in buying a new album for the photographs of the dukes and princes I refused before I married you."

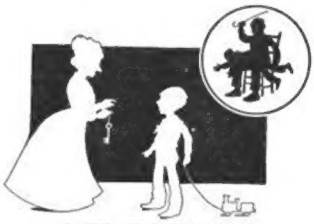
* * * * *

HARD LINES.

BACON: "Did you notice Miss Fussanfeathers on her bicycle to-day?"

EGBERT: "No, I didn't, and she ran into me."

* * * *



JOHNNY'S DIPLOMACY.

"Johnny," said his mother, "do you know who ate those tarts I left in the pantry?"

"I do, Mamma," replied the noble boy, his eyes filling with tears, "but it would not be gentlemanly for me to tell."

And that is how it came that Johnny's brother received two undeserved spankings, one for the tarts he did not steal and another for his truthful denial.

A DESPERATE REMEDY.

"Mamma," queried four-year-old Freddie, "does sugar ever cure any kind of disease?"

"Not that I know of, dear," replied his mother; "but why do you ask?"

"Because," answered the little fellow, "if it does, I'd like to catch it."

* * *

IF WISHES WERE HORSES.

They were out driving, and the young man was holding the reins with one hand.

"Sweetheart," he whispered, as the moon went behind a cloud, "I wish I had arms like—like——"

"Fitzsimmons'?" she asked.

"No," he exclaimed. "Like an octopus!"

* * * * *

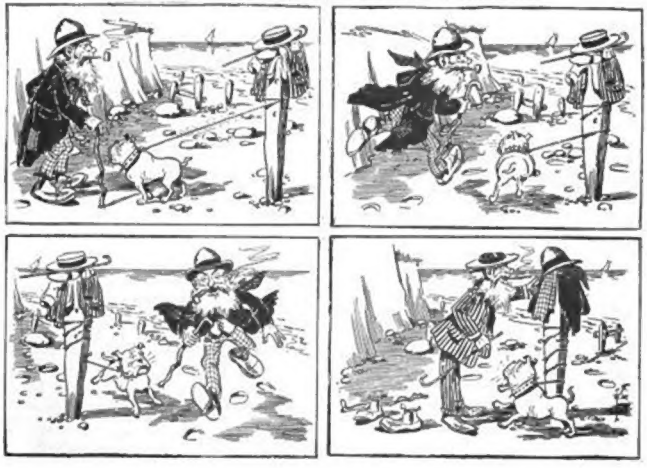
NOT QUITE THE SAME.

"Does your latest novel enjoy a large sale?" he inquired.

"I don't know whether the novel enjoys it or not," replied the author, "but I do."

* * * *

HOW LONGSHORE WILLIE GOT A NEW RIG OUT.



Digitized by Google

PRIVILEGED.

"Janet, I'm afraid you are a vain little wife. You gaze into your mirror so much."

"You ought not to blame me for that. I haven't your advantage."

"What's that?"

"You can see my face without looking into a mirror."

* * *

OBEYING INSTRUCTIONS.

FATHER: "Well, Tommy, did you give the dog his medicine while I was away?"

TOMMY: "Yes, father; I read the directions, and it said the powder should be mixed on an old broken dish. I couldn't find such a dish, so I broke one."

* * *

WITHIN THE MEMORY OF WOMAN.

A woman may, perhaps, forget
Engagements which she should have met;
Or else, by being late, upset
The person she's kept waiting.
She may, perhaps, forget her purse,
Or lose it, somehow, which is worse,
And otherwise be most perverse
And highly irritating.

But why she fails to recollect
Such simple things I can't detect;
'Tis not through want of intellect
I know for this plain reason—
That she can tell you, stitch by stitch,
Each separate hat and costume which
Her lady friends, both poor and rich,
Were through the last year's season!

Alan Armstrong.

* * *

A PEACE OFFERING.

"Oh, mamma, won't you buy a new dress for my doll?"

"But why, child?"

"Yesterday I quarrelled with her, and to-day we've made it up, and now I must give her a new dress!"

* *

NOTHING LIKE REGULARITY.

HE: "I must go and see the people at the gas office."

SHE: "Why, the bills have not increased within six months."

HE: "I know, but I have made it a rule to go round there every six months, on principle, and the time for my semi-annual kick has arrived."

Farmer (with wife and two children): "How much for tickets for the young 'uns?"

Railway Booking Clerk: "Between five and twelve, half fare."

Farmer: "Oh, bother it, Mary! we'll have to wait till to-morrow; it's half-past twelve now!"

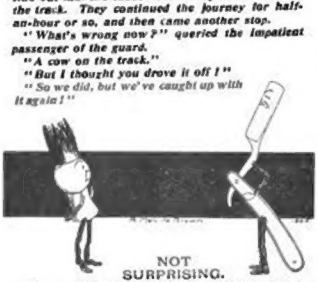
The express was racing at the rate of six miles an hour, when all of a sudden it stopped. A passenger put his head through the window, to find out that the cause of the stop was a cow on the track. They continued the journey for half-an-hour or so, and then came another stop.

"What's wrong now?" queried the impatient passenger of the guard.

"A cow on the track."

"But I thought you drove it off!"

"So we did, but we've caught up with it again!"



NOT SURPRISING.

Razor: "Ah, yes, Brush, my boy; I've been in many scrapes, but as I'm naturally sharp and bright, I've come out all right."

ONLY NATURAL

When a man's wife comes in and sees him, razor in hand, and with his face all lather, and asks him "Are you shaving?" it is a provoking thing for him to answer "No, I am blacking the stove." But it is in human nature so to reply when women will do such things.

* * *

HE DIDN'T CARE.

SHE: "Take care, Alfred! That isn't the remedy for sea sickness. Don't you see the bottle is marked 'Poison'?"

HE (groaning): "That's the one I want."

* * *

LOVE'S MEASURES.

Her glove's a five, and worn by her,
Her belt is eighteen inches,
Her tiny shoe's a number two—
She swears it never pinches.

And though *she* may pretend to chide,
It always makes me laugh
To see that number two beside
***My* seven and a half.**

And when I take—as oft I do,
That little hand in mine,
Tis almost quite concealed from view
In my great number nine.

But most of all—though I'll be bound
Some say she's tightly laced—
I love to put my arm around
That half-a-yard of waist.

Ada Leonora Harris.

* * *

WORSE AND WORSE.

"What silly verses that woman is reciting."

"I wrote them, sir!"

"Ah—oh, yes—to be sure, clever lines, but horribly delivered, don't you know. Woman must be a fool to bungle 'em so. Who is she?"

"My wife, sir!"

* *

WHERE THE SHOE PINCHES.

"What! Women overworked? Fudge! Think of the men!"

"Ah, but you know the old saying: 'Woman's work is never done.'"

"I know it, and that's the reason she oughtn't to complain. Now, a man has to do his work or lose his job."

Digitized by Google

HE KNEW.

HUSBAND: "Wake up, wake up! The house is on fire, Maria."

WIFE (imploringly): "Oh, save my new bonnet, John."

HUSBAND (determinedly): "I will. It cost more than anything else in the house."

* * *

A GOOD FIRM.

The young traveller who had recently received a rise and had just returned from his holidays, was full of business.

"It's a splendid firm, my dear sir," he was warmly assuring a shopkeeper, as he hurriedly handed him his card; "highly appreciated wherever known."

"Yes," ventured the shopkeeper, looking at the card, "I have no doubt of that."

"A better firm I never worked for, sir. In fact, sir, I esteem the firm personally as second to none."

"Quite so. I hope the feeling is reciprocal."

"Yes, sir; between ourselves, I am rising in its estimation, and hope to advance still further. Now, allow me——"

"Well, good luck to you, my boy!" interrupted the shopkeeper; "I hope you will soon be taken into partnership!" And he handed him back the photograph of a young lady.

* * * * *

TEMPERING THE WIND TO THE SHORN LAMB.

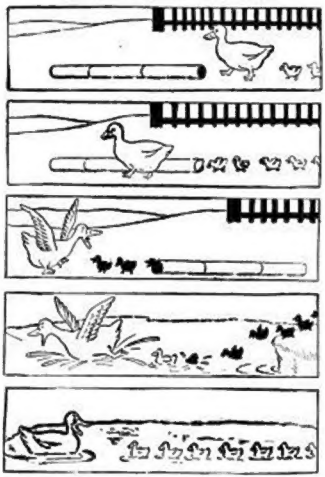
MR. LITTLEREST: "Doctor, what did you tell me was your special treatment for sleeplessness?"

MEDICO: "We strike at the cause or the origin of the trouble."

MR. LITTLEREST: "You don't say so. Well, you will find the baby in the other room. Only don't spank him too hard."

* * * *

BLACK AND WHITE; OR, THE STORY OF A PUZZLED MOTHER.



TIT FOR TAT.

Weary Willie had asked for a cup of coffee, and Euphemia had icily informed him that she had only cups of china, but she could give him some coffee in a cup.

"Thanks, miss," said the traveller, "and please be good enough to drop into the receptacle a cube of crystalline vegetable substance, with a small quantity of bovine juice."

* * *

TRUTH COMES OUT.

"Waiter," said the guest in a cheap restaurant, "is that a steam-hammer I hear in the rear?"

"No, sir," answered the waiter. "That is the cook preparing your steak, sir!"

* * *

GOOD FOR TRADE.

RAILWAY OFFICIAL (travelling incog. on his own line): "They say there has been some fault found with the lamps on these trains. Do you see anything wrong with them?"

PASSENGER: "No, sir. On the contrary, they are exactly the kind of lamps I like to see used."

RAILWAY OFFICIAL (highly pleased): "I presume you are a professional man?"

PASSENGER: "Yes, sir, I am an oculist."

* * * * *

FORCE OF CHARACTER.

"Before I can engage you as a correspondence clerk," said a business man to an applicant for a clerical position, "allow me to inquire why you write between the ruled lines instead of on them?"

"Native and characteristic independence, sir."

"Independence?"

"Yes, sir. You don't suppose I am going to allow any obscure paper-maker to dictate to me which way I shall write!"

* * * * *

A FLAW IN—

French can be learnt in half-a-year,
Or less—say, in a quarter;
With effort, one can *parlez-vous*
In time that's even shorter.

—THE "ENTENTE."

But when you have the language pat,
And freely out can hand it,
The trouble is to get the French
You meet to understand it.

F. L.

Digitized by Google

MR. EDITOR —HIS PAGE.

Some Stories, and a Little Moralising.

A DOG STORY.

I TOLD you last month an extraordinary story of a cat's sagacity. A few days ago I came across a little dog whose cleverness is almost equally striking. He is the tiniest of Yorkshire terriers, and belongs to Colonel Dodge, whose thrilling experiences at the Battle of Gettysburg appeared in THE ROYAL a few months ago. Now, at twelve o'clock lunch this little fellow generally receives a few titbits, consequently the meal is of considerable importance to him. His master noticed, a short while ago, that immediately the clock struck twelve he would leave his little basket, and show his impatience by whining or even pulling with his teeth at the Colonel's trousers.

He pondered some time on the dog's sagacity, and came to the conclusion that the little beast actually counted the strokes of the clock. This he tested by the simple experiment of making the clock strike three when it should have struck twelve. Our little friend lay in his basket at the time, and never stirred. He'd counted the strokes, and though he may have been puzzled, he felt convinced that lunch-time had not yet arrived.

"THIS WRETCHED SUNSHINE!"

I received a letter recently from a young lady who lives in Ceylon. She sends a short story and some poems. I've not yet read them, and, if the authoress' opinion counts for anything, there is really no necessity why I should. She cries what in vulgar parlance is described as "stinking fish" with a vengeance. She writes:

DEAR SIR,

I am sending you some work of mine for consideration. I'm afraid it's little use your reading it, as it's very bad. But what can you expect from anyone who is forced to live in this wretched sunshine?

Good Heavens! "Wretched sunshine!" I ask you, my dear readers who live in and about London—what should be done to an ungrateful person of this description? As I write these words I can just discern the houses on the opposite side of the street through the dense, dirty, yellow fog. I feel as if I could write Shakespeare's plays if only I had a little sun! Wretched sunshine, indeed! You ungrateful girl!

FIVE GUINEAS GO A-BEGGING.

Once more I come to you for advice and criticism. Every now and again I begin to feel that THE ROYAL may possibly contain features which, whilst they appeal to me, do not appeal to the majority of my readers, and the only thing that sets my mind at rest is to get your opinion.

Now, I want you to read this number carefully through, and to let me know which three items you like *least*, and the reason for your disapproval. I do not want a long, detailed criticism, but your opinions stated as succinctly as possible. To the five who send me what I consider the most helpful replies I will present one guinea respectively. All replies must be written on a postcard marked "Criticism," and must be addressed to the Editor, THE ROYAL MAGAZINE, 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C. Any criticism arriving after February 21st will be disqualified.

AN EXPLANATION.

In the February number of THE ROYAL MAGAZINE, 1905, appeared a story entitled "The Tenth Cartridge," attributed to C. W. Miller. We have since discovered that this story is almost a literal transcript of Mr. Cutcliffe Hyne's story, "The Ransom." Our apologies are due to Mr. Hyne, and we beg to state that "C. W. Miller," which is the pen name of one Henry Harrison Lewis, had not the slightest justification for his unwarrantable appropriation of Mr. Hyne's story.

Digitized by Google